

FRINGEWARE REVIEW

MEDIA CONTROLLERS



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sterling/kadrey interview • fiction by don webb • radio silence • bibliomania
myth of the great american bookstore • exposing corporate book retail scams

MEDIA CONTROLLERS

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WARNING:

YOU ARE BEING WATCHED!!!

The Media Controllers are monitoring you right now. They know how dangerous the information inside is. We have labored for months on this issue, creating entire dummy-issues to throw THEM off track. Many loyal FringeWarians have perished to ensure that the information contained in these pages will get into your hands. Read it and pass it on, order from the catalogue, and spread the word: **THE MEDIA CONTROLLERS ARE WATCHING!!!**

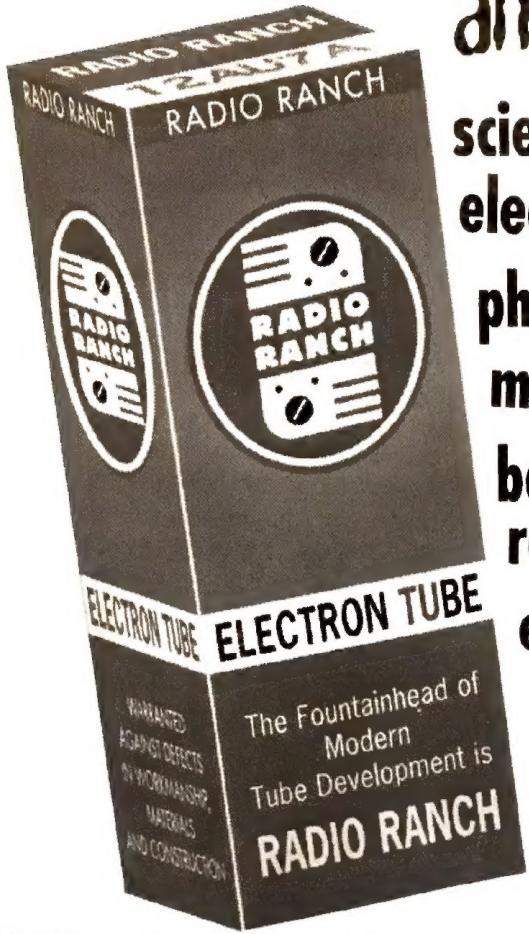
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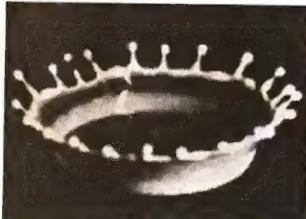
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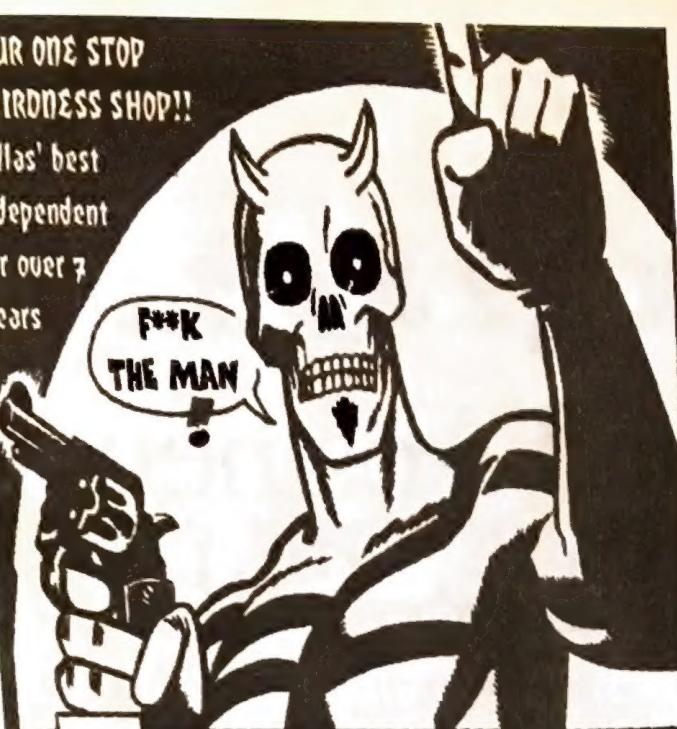
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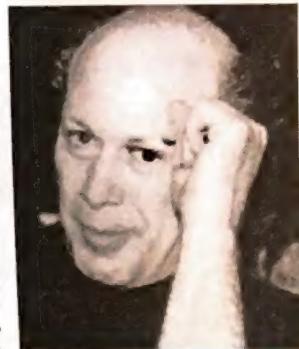
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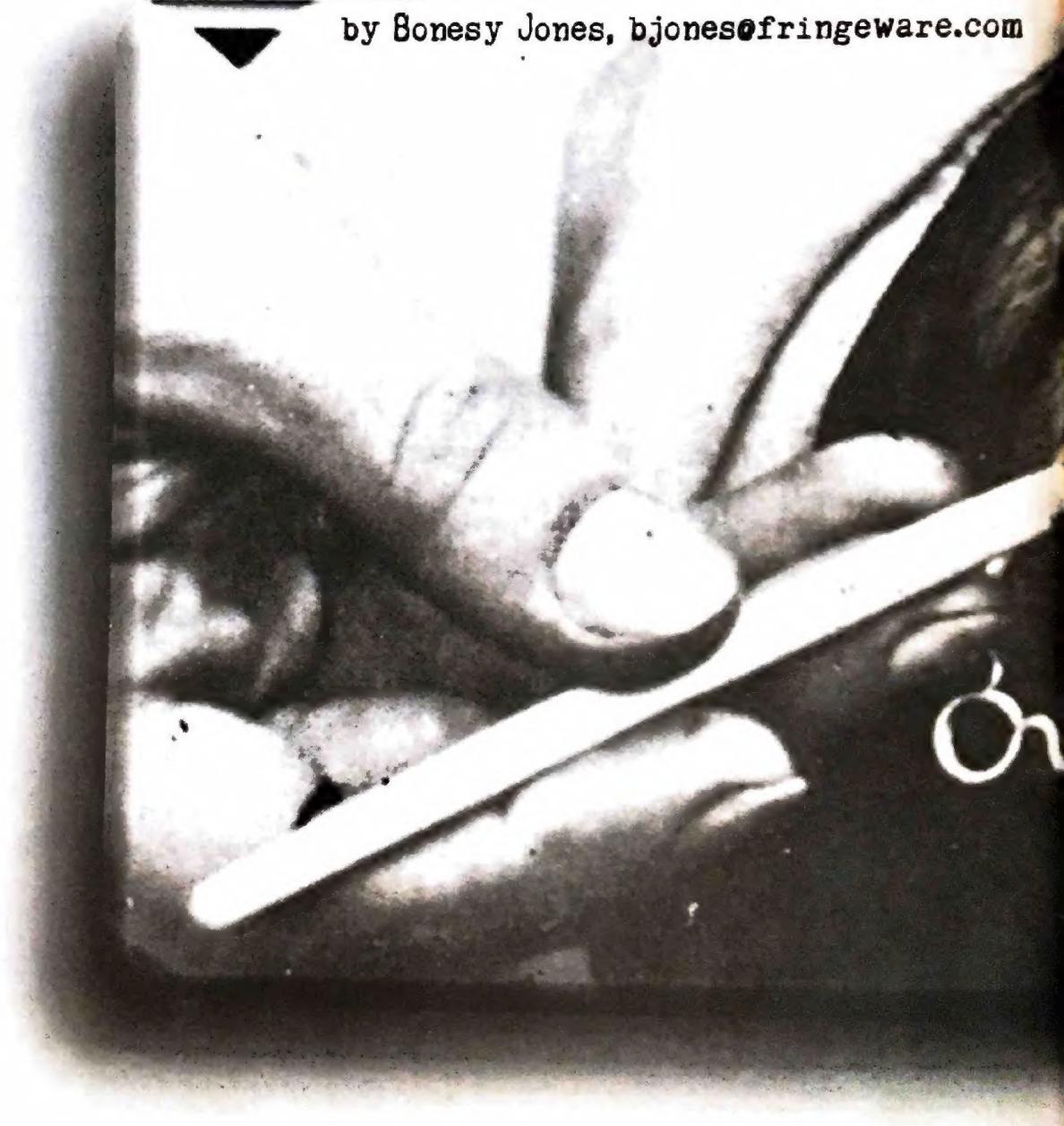
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Mass Pornographics

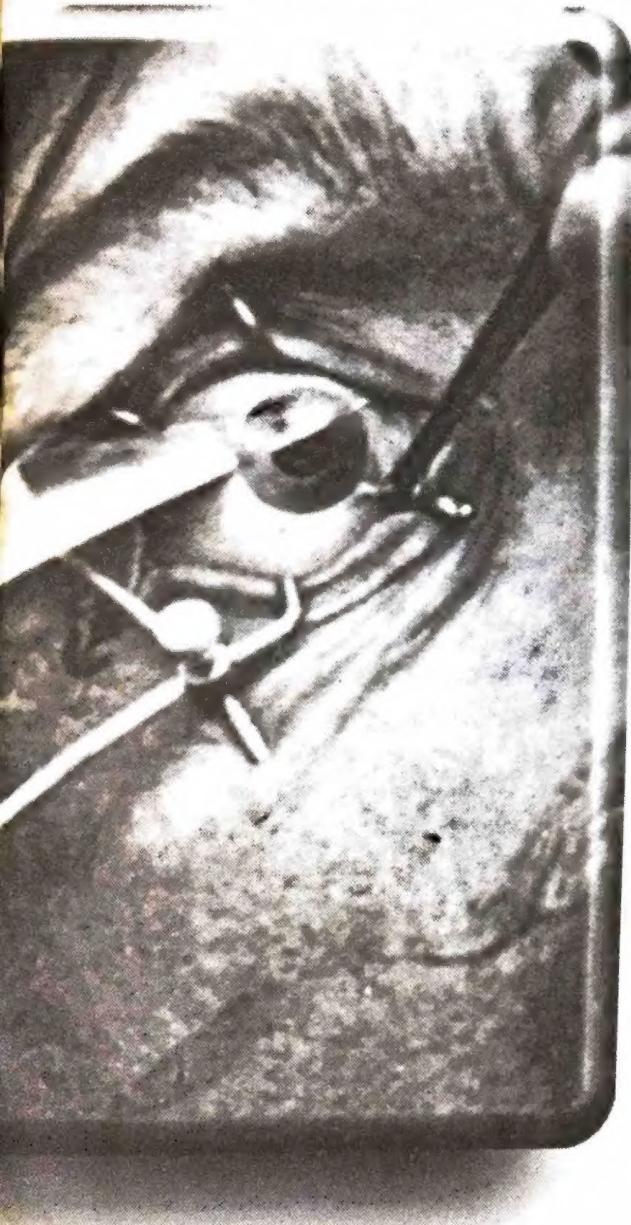
& The Sad Aesthetics
of Mass Culture

by Bonesy Jones, bjones@fringeware.com



Lack of Awareness is No Excuse

I figure that few structures in the sad retail landscapes of America are as obscene as the Modern American Mall. I wandered into one the other day and was frankly amazed and frightened. The identically clad and countenanced masses shuffled happily around the fluorescent gloom in the ecstasy of a consumer trance. Every little shop was selling the image of a comfortable, cozy, complacent lifestyle. Everything reeked of the same message: consume, strive for sameness, reproduce, don't think, indoctrinate your spawn. All the workers within were full of mindless enthusiasm and shiny rictus grins. There was not a single disturbing image, not a shred of challenging information. Everything was accessible at the lowest level, easy to digest, inviting, friendly, superficial and indescribably boring. And with bulging pockets and purses, the masses wan-



dered to and fro swinging obscenely oversized bags full of colorful products, wearing a wide variety of advertisements disguised as shirts or shoes, chattering incessantly in tired hyperbole about last night's imminently forgettable sitcom or this week's rollicking white knuckled roller coaster ride of a blockbuster movie. Nearby the fountains babbled peacefully along with piped-in predigested muzak versions of the lastest alterna-rock jingles. Children gazed with freshly learned avarice at pennies wishfully shining in the depths. I thought about Kurtz in the jungle: "The Boredom... the Boredom..." A wave of nausea washed slowly over me. Never get out of the boat.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day: For the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day."

—The Prayer Book of the Church of England

The idea that somewhere on the planet at that very moment some poor soul was hungry or desperate or, perhaps, having his testicles ground to pulp for his beliefs was nowhere to be found. The Buddha would have looked long and hard for the poor or sick or or old. This was, after all, the Modern American Mall, the quintessence of mass media culture, where anything antithetical to the needs and goals of the Great Beast of Commodity was not only absent, but nearly impossible to even consider.

"Political rhetoric, the tidal mendacity of journalism and the mass media, the trivializing cant of public and socially approved modes of discourse, have made of almost everything modern urban men and women say or hear or read an empty jargon, a cancerous loquacity."

—George Steiner from the essay "Real Presences"

In the excellent pamphlet, Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy, Robert McChesney makes the rather unsettling claim: "in what stands as perhaps the most damning statement one could make about the news media, some studies have suggested that the more a person consumes commercial news, the less capable that person is of understanding politics or public affairs." And I believe the implication follows that the more deeply immersed you are in the images and grammar of contemporary Corporate Media, the less capable you are of being able to engage it with any sort of genuinely critical intelligence.

"Where is the Life we have lost in the Living?"

—T. S. Eliot

And there before me: in the softly lit pornographic consumer ecstasy of the Mall, there was no context for any anti-commodifiable information. The Mall Sheep cannot understand the ecstatic language of the wolf because it has never been anywhere outside of the pasture. You could try to point out how everyone was trying to be different by buying the same thing, but none of the Mall Sheep would understand. You could point to how everything was advertising image over substance or fashion over function, but they wouldn't comprehend it. It was a scene of somnambulistic sickness unto death. I halfway expected Charon to come breezing out of Victoria's Secret on a golfcart and start ferrying the damned through the Foodcourt and ever deeper into the black wet maw of an over-commodified existentialist hell that would make even Sartre blanch. Why remove the eyelids when you already control the brain?

**"No need of the gridiron,
when it comes to Hell,
it's other people."**

—Jean Paul Sartre, *Huis Clos*

Seeking some measure of refuge, I retreated into the one, yes one, McBookstore. Surely, I thought, I could injure a bit of eternity here amongst the cathedrals of the written Word. I glanced at the eye-catching dumps full of mass market paperbacked movie tie-ins that were already redolent of pulp they would soon return to. I idled for a moment before the multiple-copied piles of New York Times Bestsellers which stood as faced-out testimony to the idiocy of the mass demographers. I walked by the cute little endcaps stocked with seasonal cookbooks, movie star bios, datebooks, and pathetic humor for the quietly desperate. And I winced as I moved along the long aisle of fiction that included Stendhal with Danielle Steele, Dickens with Janet Dailey, Kazantzakis with Judith Krantz. With a mounting sense of irritation, I went up to the front counter and asked the well-groomed, name-tagged and bow-tied clerk where the philosophy or religion section was. After a making sure that was someone "to cover his station", he took me to the one bookcase philosophy section, containing such philosophical masterpieces as Aristotle Made Easy, The Tao of Pooh, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance and The Book of Virtues. I asked about religion and he turned me around to face a couple of cases of Bibles and several others full of inspirational literature. What about the religions that the rest of the world believe in? I asked. He pointed me back to the philosophy section. That's it, he said, adding with a chirp, philosophy and other religions don't sell very well. And, well, have another mindless empty day!

I was stunned. Working in an independent bookstore close to a major University had obviously spoiled me. I had no idea that things were so bad out in the worm-filled heart of mediatised America. The rough beast was not slouching towards, it had arrived; and it had squirted one slime covered mall after another out of its throbbing thorax onto every crossroads it passed. But I truly had not figured that bookstores had also become so infected by the diseases of total commodification and mindless entertainment. Previously, it had seemed that regardless of the rest of the mall dreck and dross, there was always a bookstore or two within which to recover a sense of culture, to be challenged, disturbed or, at the very least, amused. But as I browsed through the other dismal sections of this mockery of a bookstore that I was in, it felt as if I was in one of those bathetic infomercials on late night TV. Abridgements, bowdlerizations, easy-to-read, illustrated versions, beginner's guides, books for dummies, idiot's guides to everything littered the shelves: the socially acceptable survivors of a shrunken culture, indeed, of an anti-culture.

"It's hard to find an industry that has been picked cleaner by the conglomerates than book publishing," Forbes observed in 1981. That industry has now been picked to death by its own parents, who would, it seems, do anything to books, and to the culture, for the sake of profits."

—Mark Crispin Miller, from his essay, "The Publishing Industry" in Conglomerates and the Media

I believe a culture can be accurately judged by the quality of the books it produces and consumes—and thus, by the quality of its bookstores. The great books are priceless works of art, cultural monuments, and it is the responsibility of all great bookstores to support, stock and endorse them. The recent rise to power of various Media Controllers has led to nothing less than the beginnings of an Intellectual Holocaust with regard to book culture. Do we actually want to be known as the Age of Tom Clancy or as the Era of the Steven King? And it is perhaps not too far a stretch to make the claim that those who are involved are no less culpable than the kindly old German train conductors that made the daily trip from Berlin to Auschwitz. Lack of awareness is no excuse.

Inoculate Yourself Against Media Control

Never before in history has a society, as a whole, had more leisure time. Never before have there been more empty hours to fill. And the entire entertainment industry stands as vivid testimony to how much people are willing to pay to have their minds occupied for a few idle

hours. And the business has become powerful enough to reshape the manner in which even traditionally non-entertainment media are presented. Everything is entertainment, distraction, advertisement. We live in the United States of Entertainment, voting for the most telegenic leaders, watching our pseudo-news on the most graphically interesting networks and buying the products with the most interesting advertisement campaigns. And with every laugh-tracked pratfall and carefully staged photo-op, we surrender more and more of our minds to the profit centered interests of the Media Controllers. It's just the easiest thing to do. Convenience is the key. Whenever you allow something else to do your thinking for you, you surrender a small measure of your freedom. The corner Sack O' Crap is more convenient but it also offers fewer choices and higher prices. In effect, you are paying someone else to limit your possibilities, to mediate for you. And while this might not make a difference with regard to what flavor of Slurpee you want, it makes a fucking world of difference when it involves newspapers and journals and books- information that can actually make a difference in how and why you live your life.



The crucial questions: what filters have been set up for us with regard to the information that comes to us through the TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and books? How much trust do we place in these various media? Do you believe CNN or the New York Times or Time magazine is telling you the truth about the world? Granted: there are no absolutes with regard to objectivity; but does anyone believe that the handful of Corporations that are exercising increasing control over the mass media have our best interests at heart? Are we being provided with information about the world that has no profit motive or hidden agenda? What unpleasant items of political duplicity, US backed genocide or corporate environmental rape are being conveniently "filtered" out of the "news" because it doesn't reflect well on the "sponsors"? Is it the case that we are merely being entertained, distracted, so as to remain complacent, apathetic or, at best, cynical?

"The way it works here is that there is a system of shaping, control, and so on, which gives a certain perception of the world... it has to do with marginalizing the public, and ensuring that they don't get in the way of the elites who are supposed to run things without interference."

—Noam Chomsky.

Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media

The implication here is not that there is some sort of global conspiracy or illuminated cabal of master media manipulators. Rather, the concern here is with those who shape the form and content of media in order to increase profit on a mass scale. Enormous currents of commodity are their vital concern. They want to colonize your imagination with product associations, inane slogans and virus-like jingles: soft drinks are Cokes ("It's the Real Thing!"), pairs of shoes are Nikes ("Just do it.") and the big breasted babes love guys who drink Miller Lite ("Tastes Great, Less Filling!"). They hunger for you, as a part of mass culture, to **pay attention**, to **spend time**, to **buy in** to the reality/ lifestyle that they are selling. (These phrases are evocative of how corrupted by economic metaphors the language has become.) They sell you the idea that you've been **working** hard at the old 9 to 5, that you deserve a break today, now it's Miller time, time to turn off that pesky brain, kick back your favorite **easy chair**, grab the twitch sensitive remote and guffaw like a bad ventriloquist's dummy at your nightly programs. Programs: **get it?** Make no mistake here: the Media Controllers are merely giving us what we want. No one's being strapped into a chair with their eyelids stretched open. The problem is with **what you want**. But on what channel can you find "programs" that present deeper explorations, fuller explanations, quality over quantity, increased interactions and information that is free from profit and power motivations? Ah, but Seinfeld is **so funny!** And the commercials are so clever. I'm sorry, what was I thinking? **Change the channel.** See what else is on. Or go read the latest page-turner or bodice ripping political thriller. Yawn, yawn and fucking yawn. **Evolve or die. I want more.**

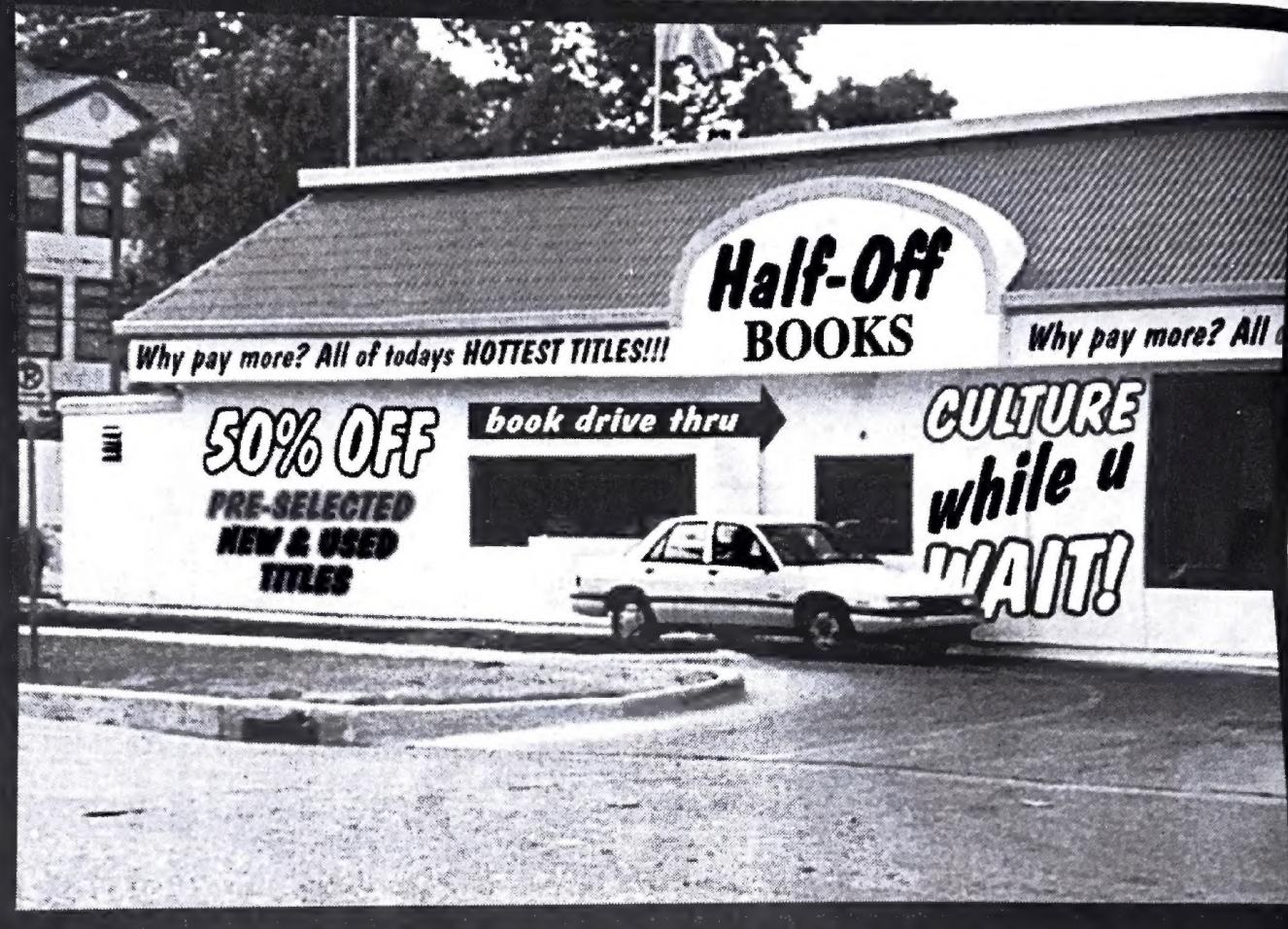
Without any doubt, it is a very subtle form of mind control that seeks to reduce you—and the culture—to a commodity equation. It is not only your responsibility to yourself, but to the culture, to inoculate yourself against being controlled by the media. And it is towards this hope—that the idea of culture still has relevance—that this issue of the *FringeWare Review* is dedicated.

The Little Used Bookstore



The Quest For *Higher Sameness*

by Kip Keller, kkeller@onr.com



Once there was a Little Used Bookstore started by two ex-hippies who wanted to keep books in people's hands, not in the ground, and maybe make a little money at the same time. They started modestly in a former laundromat, selling magazines and music as well as books, and learned the tricky business of selling used books on a large scale one hard-earned lesson at a time. They bought books from the public and learned by trial and error what sold and what couldn't be given away. They bought job lots of books sight unseen that sometimes turned out to be thousands of workbooks in Spanish for an out-of-print textbook series.



and sometimes contained nothing but current bestsellers. They learned about duplicitous landlords, dishonest employees, thieving customers, and the vagaries of selling used magazines, used LP's, used cassette tapes, used eight-tracks, used CD's, used laser disks, and used software. And with all of this hard-won on-the-job knowledge, they managed to stay in business, stay informal, and make a little money. You see, there wasn't really anyone else around doing exactly what they were doing, and people liked buying books for fifty percent of what they cost new.

The Little Used Bookstore grew into a little chain of bookstores. One of the ex-hippies made sure the stores had plenty of books, and the other handled the bookkeeping. The bookkeeper made sure that growth was slow, debt was avoided, and employees were treated better than they were generally in retail jobs. And working for the ex-hippies could be heaven. Dress was very casual, music of the employees' choosing was played in the stores, and while pay wasn't great, the atmosphere and camaraderie were. Almost more like a family than a job. Oh to have been young and free and working at the Little Used Bookstore chain! For those with the company at the beginning who stayed with the company were rewarded beyond their wildest dreams. For the Little Used Bookstore chain grew and grew and grew into a Large Used Bookstore chain. And when the need arose for managers, assistant managers, district managers, and corporate officers, there was no better qualification than having been with the company since Day One (or at least be related to one of those lucky few). This was another way the company was like a family: for the ugly little secret at the heart of the Little Used Bookstore chain, the snake in the garden of earthly bookish delights, the seed of all later corruption—and the tragic flaw of the bookkeeper—was nepotism of the crassest kind. Proximity to a founding employee provided entree and comprehensive job security. You could run a store (or a group of stores) into the ground, ignore all company regulations at whim, engage in sexual harassment, abuse drugs chronically—your relationship to a favored one shielded you and guaranteed you immunity. And the daughters, husbands, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, and best friends of the original employees settled in to become the aristocracy of the company: running the stores, running the districts, running the company, hiring their friends, husbands, wives, etc., becoming the heirs-apparent, and then, after the book buyer faded away after a series of strokes, and after the death of the bookkeeper, becoming the heirs.

And, in the way of a family, with the parents gone, the children had the run of the house.

And the children set out to change some things. First, there was the matter of money. While the children early on, once they controlled a majority of the votes on the Board of Directors, had voted themselves all of the company's stock and refused to allow any to be sold—even to other employees—they now realized that there was another source of revenue for themselves that had not been fully exploited. The bookkeeper had started a plan that allowed a hefty percentage of the company's profits to be distributed to the stores' employees. All employees got a little money, and those at highly profitable stores got more: the quarterly bonuses often equaled a month's pay in these more profitable stores. The corporate officers got something, but not nearly as much as some entry-level employees who worked at stores that made lots of money. Of course the corporate officers all were paid salaries much higher than those of any store employee—and they had those stock benefits—but the idea that some skate punk who lucked into working at a good store was taking home a bigger bonus than theirs drove them crazy. Additionally, a sizable portion of the company's profits were made by a few stores in the Central Texas, and this was intolerable to managers of stores everywhere else, whose lazy, incompetent, unambitious, poorly trained employees griped to no end about how they were just as worthy of a big fat bonus as anyone else. No system, no matter how just, could survive a double-barrel blast of greed. So the children "equalized" the bonuses throughout the company. And while the corporate officers may have thought they were just putting one over on the Little Red Hen, they were in fact killing the Goose That Laid the Golden Egg. Would you work as hard for the same as someone who did half the work one-tenth as well? Ever been to Starnesville?

Once the money was equalized, the children set out to remake the stores in their own image. They developed a positive mania for conformity. No more funky informality—now things would be standardized. Store fixtures, store organization, store locations would as much as physically possible be made identical throughout the chain. The height and color of shelves, the front and back counters, would conform to standard set at the corporate office, a bureaucracy as implacable as the Pentagon. Music could still be played in the stores; at certain times it had to be played and it had to be music chosen by the company. You see, one of the children had a job buying huge amounts of the cheapest varieties of bargain "music" available for sale in the stores. Poorly recorded classical excerpts by fourth-rate orchestras, anonymous new age noodling, nature sounds, etc. It was this that the stores had to play at peak shopping times ➤

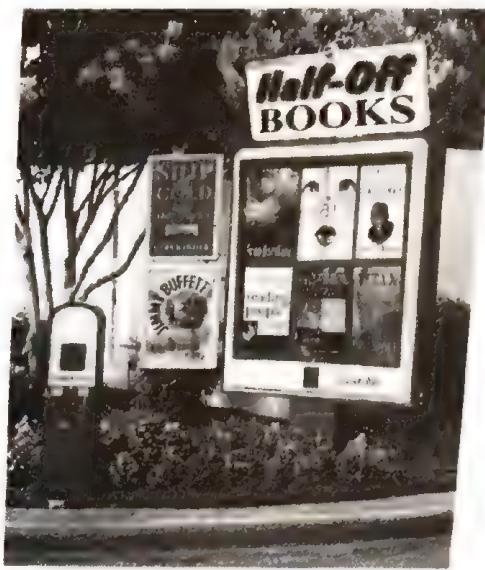
because the stuff wasn't moving very well, despite its low price, and so the pump had to be primed with enforced listening, because it couldn't be the buyer's fault, no, if only those good-for-nothing employees would push the stuff, it would sell, it was quality merchandise, after all.

And what about the organization of the stores? Whereas once attention was paid to the individual character of different markets, even different areas within the same market, now, though there could be nothing like a standardized inventory in a used bookstore that bought hundred of different books from the public each day, there would be standardized stores. They would all be categorized alike, arranged alike, organized alike. What if your customers prefer to shop literature separately from current fiction? What if you have a large student clientele that only shops Literature to the exclusion of fiction? What if an informal poll of hundreds of your customers showed that the overwhelming majority wanted to keep Lit and Fiction unmixed? Tough shit. In fact, you should be thankful we don't fire the whole damn bunch of you for that little stunt with the poll, and if you don't do what you're told in the future, that's just what will happen. No guff about free inquiry or the First Amendment either (we do that Banned Book thing every year, so our ass is covered there) —this is a business, excuse me, a corporation, and you will follow the orders of your corporate officers unquestioningly. Now, you will combine the Literature and Fiction sections posthaste, thank you very much.

And the sameness spread. No more free-standing buildings; now stores would be in strip malls. The presence of remaindered books in the stores, while a part of things from the beginning, grew larger, so that more and more of the titles in every store would be the same. [A quick lesson in bookstore jargon: "remainder" refers to either publishers' overstock titles (i.e. books which didn't sell out their printings) or books created directly as lower-priced entries into both the used and first-run book markets (cookbooks, gift books, and children's books are popular categories)]. Procedures were standardized through the use of training videotapes all store employees were required to watch. And of course, coffee bars—of at least carts—were mandated for all stores (no chairs, no tables, no problem—just put your cup down anywhere).

And despite this concerted effort to impose conformity on them, the stores didn't become replicants of each other. But the children had started to think of them as the same, and all of that perceived sameness drew computers unto itself the way malls attract Gap outlets. If all of your inventory has a bar-coded price on it, if every item in your store

can be quickly logged into a computer, if there is no need ever to make a judgment call about a price, then a computer is just what you need: you have created an environment that barely needs a clerk. But if none of those conditions apply,



then maybe a computer wouldn't be quite so suitable. The bookkeeper had long ago realized this, and so while she was alive, the company had determinedly lagged behind the rest of the retail book world in the use of technology. Until the last few years of her life, the bookkeeper literally had been a bookkeeper, recording all of the financial information for all of the stores in an oversized, Ebenezer Scrooge-like ledger. No computers—in fact, she didn't really trust electronic cash registers. But the children *loved* computers. They loved the huge flow of instantaneous data they provided. They didn't care that computers would slow down things to a crawl at the registers (they never worked counter shifts), they didn't care that the existing registers worked very well and could nearly always be repaired at the stores, they didn't care that the computers would mean tech support, upgrades, and inexplicable crashes, they didn't even care enough about the whole project to have software written that would take into account the needs of a used bookstore (computers could help by tracking sales and inventory of the stores' reorderable titles, but that was the one thing computers, in fact, could not do) —they just loved computers, and so computers it would be. For everybody, whether anybody wanted them or not.

When the children were not fostering sameness, they changed things that had proven effectiveness through the years. Since they had long ago hired and promoted their spouses and close friends, the children decided that the old policy of only promoting those who had worked their way up from entry-level positions in the company was really

short-sighted and unnecessary. Did you really need bookstore experience in order to make decisions affecting the running of dozens of bookstores? Did you even need read very much? The children quickly decided lack of any bookstore experience was no longer an impediment to a top job with the company. They perhaps unwittingly adopted the attitude of the former president of a large mall-based bookstore chain who, when asked how his former position as CEO of Proctor and Gamble qualified him to run a chain of more than a thousand bookstores, replied that you sell books the same way you sell toothpaste—a huge volume of a few varieties. The children must have decided that you market books the same way you market department-store fashions since they chose someone who had previously done that to decide how the company would present its unified self to the world. And what if radio ads got heavy airplay that announced with the company's half of half sale a \$7 paperback would now be just \$2.99, and coupons lacking expiration dates ran in large-circulation newspapers or were mailed to thousands of customers, and newspaper ads for sales chronically lacked start and stop dates? These oversights and omissions might not have been due to her lack of bookstore experience; after all, she also made positive, progressive decisions. She persuaded a professional football player to endorse the company, and she didn't need bookstore experience to do that. She promoted "theme" days (and weeks and months) at the stores: National Mother-in-Law Day, Be Kind to Animals Week, Italian-American History Month—all of those major book-buying holidays; and she didn't need bookstore experience to do that. She directed the stores to quiz customers leaving the stores how they had enjoyed their shopping experience, to have customers fill out surveys and questionnaires while they waited to sell their books, to "merchandise" their non-book items in little baskets, and she did all of this without any previous bookstore experience.

And despite the best efforts of the children to the contrary, the company survived. Computerized, standardized, equalized—even in this procrustean state, the stores survive. For mass duplication can be a survival strategy; ask an amoebae. Or stores may take on a less wholesome cast of uniformity, the pallor of coma, or rigor mortis. And they may even thrive—no one ever went broke in America providing everyone with the same experience. In any event, it may become increasingly difficult to tell the stores apart. And the next time you walk into one them, notice the same stacks of remainders, the same music, the same layout found in other stores. Expect this trend to accelerate and intensify. Starbucks, anyone?

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Barnes & Noble

Internal Memorandum 3.2323: Confidential

TO: Store Management

FROM: Holden Mycock

DATE: June 2, 1998

SUBJECT: Tips for Increasing Bookseller Productivity Through the Manipulation of Store Environment and Management Attitudes.

Our mission, expressed in the eloquent statement by our founder and chairman Len Riggio, is to "operate the best specialty retail business in America, regardless of the product we sell". However, company productivity studies have indicated to us that the average employee prefers to believe in the notion of a "book culture". Furthermore, when the psychological environment of a Barnes & Noble store is such that it appears to advocate the ideals of "book culture", our studies have shown that employees are willing to increase productivity for less pay, that store sales increase, that consumer perception is more positive and that the average consumer purchase is higher. With these findings in mind, we advocate the adoption of the following five management policies.

1. When hiring, in casual conversation with booksellers, and especially during store meetings, sell the notion that your store believes in a "book culture". Essentially, this is the idea that sales are secondary to the operation of the bookstore. The most fundamental notion behind the belief of a "book culture" is that the bookstore provides the community with valuable information resources and a serves as a potential meeting place for intellectually and spiritually fulfilling activities. Of course, you are not required in any way to actually believe in this yourself.
2. Emphasize that your store is unique and makes autonomous decisions apart from the larger company. Towards this end, be sure to speak of your store as "us" as opposed the "them", "New York" or "B&N Brass". The idea is to get the booksellers to think they have a say and can make a difference. Of course, this is not the case. When frustration arises amongst your staff concerning policy sent down from the New York offices, express your sympathies with the staff, stating that "everyone just needs to keep trying harder".
3. Encourage trivial competition amongst your staff, rewarding first with task related titles (Head Magazine Stocker, Asst. NYT Bestseller Stocker, Book Display Manager, etc.), then with incremental hourly raises of .05, .10 and, for truly exceptional productivity, .15. It is only human to be competitive. And even though these "raises" are symbolic, amounting to not more than 1.20 a day, you will find productivity levels will increase in proportional to the intensity of inter-staff competition.
4. Especially encourage those employees who openly express their love of books and who tend to feel they have a personal involvement with their sections and duties. Often, such employees will be willing to not accept a raise for the greater good of the store. Repeatedly refer to them as "great booksellers" or "promoters of book culture" or "the best thing that ever happened to this store". If you are feeling especially creative, you can even arrange "bookseller of the week or month" contests. Contact your the District Manager for the "Book Culture Promotion Kit".
5. Finally, if you discover that you have inadvertently hired an especially ardent believer in "book culture", it is recommended that you remove them from your staff as quickly as possible. (See Internal Memo 4.978) Our studies have found that such individuals will quickly undermine store morale by demanding real solutions and taking actions which directly antagonistic to the expressed mission statement.

If you have any questions or problems with this memo, you are expected to contact your DM immediately. Remember: as a manager, you are expected to sell as much product as quickly as possible for the least amount of effort and expense. This has been and is the key to Barnes & Noble's success in the American retail marketplace.

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Surrendering Integrity

by Sedgewick, sedgewick10juno.com

By nature I am a collector; by habit I am a collector of information. And by addiction I am a collector of books. To me, books represent vitality, ideas, controversy. I don't see them as money-makers but rather as idea-makers, revolutionaries. I needed a habitat that would feed and nurture this obsession. I also needed a job. The answer seemed to be clear, and all I had to do was grab hold of it with my eager hands.

So, like a moth loves a flame, I gravitated towards Barnes & Noble; and as a hungry wolf loves a pack of dumb grass-grazing sheep, Barnes & Noble pounced on me, sucked me in, and tried to shit me out.

The day I walked into the bookstore to apply for a job I was greeted with the dangerously welcoming smell of books and money. I got the application from a bleary-eyed bookseller standing resignedly behind a counter. I found a desolate corner near the fiction section to sit and fill out the document with the dreadful feeling of rehashing old employers and scavenging my memory for information now obsolete. Still, when I finished a feeling of joy rushed through me as I looked up and saw old, familiar friends: James Baldwin, Georges Bataille, Charles Bukowski. And I knew I would get the job. And I did.

My first indication that something was rotten in Bookville occurred on the day that I was hired. The store manager told me that the main reason he hired me was based on my extensive experience working in retail. I was shocked when the interview ended shortly afterward with a "good to have you aboard" and a "we'll see you Monday." Exit manager. There was no "who is your favorite author?" Or "what books have you read recently?" Or even a "name a book written by Stephen King/ John Grisham/ James Patterson." There wasn't even a damn book quiz à la Borders Books and Music to test my abilities of being only slightly smarter than a chimpanzee. I stood in the History section nodding my head absently as the Boss walked away, happy that he'd snared another retail worker. Love and knowledge of books be damned.

The first few months of working for the corporate bookstore were fun, educational even. I saw and learned so much in such a short period of time that I was inevitably blinded to what was really happening.

Each day: punch in, work, punch out.

The point of it all was to sell as much merchandise (not books, *merchandise*) to as many people in as few hours as possible. Although it was unspoken, as so many things in corporate America are, it was stressed that we focus not on the customer as an individual, but as an inconsequential part of a greater, consuming whole. The idea was not *how can we help each customer thoroughly?* But rather *how many customers can we help with minimum effort in X amount of time?* It was something that I was conditioned to accept and even began to enforce.

But it didn't stop there. Not only did we as booksellers learn to treat the customer as a part of a large, servile mass, we were trained subliminally to act as cogs in a gargantuan machine known as Barnes & Noble. And it worked on me—for a while anyway.



My enlightenment, so to speak, did not happen all at once. I did not wake up one day to find myself screaming, "My God, what have they done to me!" No, much like madness, it was a gradual process that etched itself in little by little, like a stonemason slowly chisels at granite. One day I would notice that displaying New York Times Bestsellers was more important than making sure we had a well-stocked

Culture Studies section. Or I would come across de Beauvoir's The Second Sex or Huxley's The Doors of Perception shelved in Fiction simply because they would sell better there. Or I would see Jock Sturges and Sally Mann discretely shelved in Photography: one copy each, do not display. But we had plenty of copies of Ansel Adams' books: all highly sellable, non-threatening and prominently displayed. Or maybe I would be given a memo explaining exactly which titles New York wanted to go up for that month.

Consistency. Uniformity. Each store must look exactly the same. What are we displaying? Doesn't matter, as long as it sells. Is it controversial? Offensive? Send it back, return it, strip it, get rid of it. It's a New York Times Bestseller? It was on Oprah? Order it. We want it. It will sell.

I had become so conditioned and so used to the glamour of working with books that it took me a while to realize that I was actually working **against** books. I lost sight of my initial reasons for working in a bookstore. As a patient slowly comes out of a foggy haze of post-surgery, my eyes gradually opened to reveal a fresh set of metaphorical strings sewn into my arms, legs, mouth... my thoughts. I had become a meat puppet, a lackey, a sheep lost inside the belly of the giant whale called Barnes & Noble. And I had to get out before they had me completely battered, deep fat fried and devoured.

So here I sit writing this knowing it will not change much in the corporate bookworld. It may cause a minor rift in the ocean of Barnes & Noble; it will most likely cause them to take notice that we're onto them. But we can change so heed my warning and do as I say. Stay away from these chain bookstores either as customers or as booksellers. They're tempting and enticing with their rows of books, comfortable chairs and coffee. But they're a mirage, a Delilah who will shear your locks off at any opportunity.

I had to find out the hard way. I had to surrender my integrity to lay down with the devil and I've seen what he has to offer: your soul for a place in the corporate bookstore machine. I had my soul in my hands ready to hand it over until I opened my eyes and snatched it back. And now I can say that the proverbial Man no longer has his proverbial fist up my proverbial ass.

An Open Letter from the President of the Friends United in Creative Knowledge of the Faceless Attitudes of Corporate Entities:

As we all know, in February of this year, a man walked into a Barnes & Noble Superstore in Austin, Texas wearing a paper bag with holes cut for his eyes. He approached the front counter and politely asked the clerk for assistance in finding a particular book. The clerk immediately called for a manager to the front. An assistant manager appeared and asked the man why he was wearing a paper bag on his head. In the now infamous reply, the man said: "I am tired of the corporate attitude which views me merely as a faceless consumer. And I am wearing this paper bag as a symbol of my protest against this sort of mind-set." The assistant manager then told him to either remove the bag or leave the store. Not willing to give in any further to the disease, the man elected to leave the store.

This event was subsequently reported over the FringeWare News Network and Midnight Special Bookstore's Disgusted with Superstores Opinion List. And here in Dunwich, a group of us decided that we had also had enough of similar corporate attitudes. It was high time to take action. Following the non-violent example of the man in Austin, we began to wear paper bags into various Superstores around the area. We met with remarkably consistent results: all of us were asked to either remove our bags or leave the store. This was to be expected. But it only further stimulated our outrage.

Thus we have decided to hold a nationwide mass protest action at 12:00 noon on the 23rd of November of this year. What we have planned is for thousands of paper bag wearing individuals to peacefully enter into either Barnes & Noble or Border's Bookstores and browse for approximately 15 minutes. Already, the response to this has been overwhelming. Groups of individuals are being organized all over the world to join us in the November 23rd protest.

If you are likewise fed up with being treated as a faceless consumer by various corporations, please join us with your paper bag on the 23rd of November. You can order a custom bag from the FringeWare Catalogue. And if you are interested in further action, contact us at:

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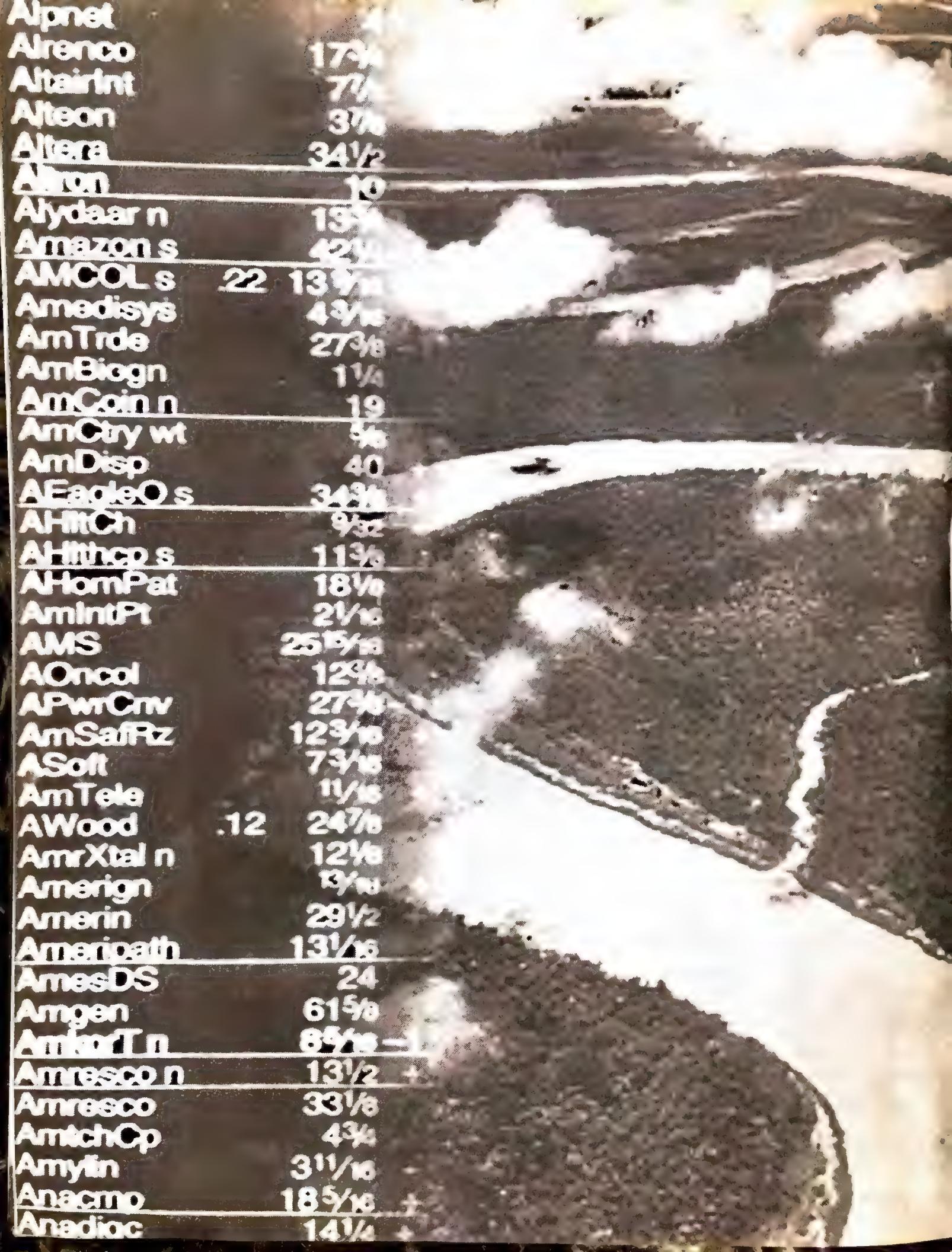
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| AmBiogn | 1 1/4 |
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| AmDisp | 40 |
| AEagleO s | 34 9/16 |
| AHitchCh | 9 1/2 |
| AHitchCp s | 11 1/2 |
| AHomPat | 18 1/2 |
| AmIntPt | 2 1/16 |
| AMS | 25 5/8 |
| AOncol | 12 5/8 |
| APwtCnv | 27 3/8 |
| AmSafeRz | 12 3/10 |
| ASoft | 7 3/16 |
| AmTele | 11 1/16 |
| AWood | .12 24 1/2 |
| AmrXtal n | 12 1/8 |
| Amerign | 13/16 |
| Amerin | 29 1/2 |
| Ameripath | 13 1/8 |
| AmesDS | 24 |
| Amgen | 61 5/8 |
| AmforTn | 85/16 |
| Amresco n | 13 1/2 |
| Amresco | 33 1/8 |
| AmitchCp | 4 3/8 |
| Amylin | 3 11/16 |
| Anacomp | 18 5/16 |
| Anadiac | 14 1/4 |

AMAZING GEICO

by Jim Thompson, jim@fringeware.com

Here I sit in the dark, full of diet pills and coffee, watching my latest acquisition of amateur porn (www.smallworks.com/jim/Playball.avi) in one window while I punch keys at a crappy "Word" processor hosted on a crappy OS, both seemingly slapped together by some reject from the White House intern pool who now draws a paycheck at Microsoft.

"Jittery" doesn't begin to describe my mood.

If there were any justice, **Billy Bob Clinton** would lay bleeding in the middle of Pennsylvania Ave, the object of a vicious stomping by the White House Press Corps. Apparently, the only think keeping ol' Slick beyond the reach of an impeachment hearing is the current good health of the economy and the ever-rising stock market, the sea of cash that keeps things spinning.

We're gun-totin', crypto-sportin' capitalists (with-Stalin-on-the-wall) here at FringeWare, and we find great pleasure watching our competitors twist in the oft chill winds that blow down Wall Street. Amazon.COM (AMZN), Borders (BGP) and Barnes & Nobel (BKS) are all publicly-traded companies, which means that we get to peek in the closets otherwise known as quarterly reports and see the dirt, though sometimes we gotta dig:

<http://www.fringeware.com/info/ticker.html>

Since Amazon.COM splits 2:1 today (June 1, 1998) let's look at Amazon.COM, "Earth's biggest bookstore", also known by its ticker, AMZN.

Selling Short

Short selling is the selling of a security that the seller does not own, or any sale that is completed by the delivery of a security borrowed by the seller. Short selling is a legitimate trading strategy. Short sellers assume the risk that they will be able to buy the stock at a more favorable price than the price at which they sold short.

Stated another way, selling short or "shorting" a stock is a bet that the price of the stock will go down. Selling short is the opposite of "going long", betting that the price of the stock will go up.

NASDAQ firms are required to report their short positions as of settlement on the 15th of each month, or the preceding business day if the 15th is not a business day.

Here are the short positions for AMZN for the last 12 months. Remember that AMZN had its initial public offering (IPO) on May 15, 1997. You can download this data at:

<http://www.nasd.com/mr4c.html>

AMZN

| Date | Shares short | Avg Dly volume | S/A |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|
| 05/15/98 | 4,312,908 | 920,114 | 4.69 |
| 04/15/98 | 3,392,794 | 828,412 | 4.09 |
| 03/15/98 | 3,565,482 | 873,318 | 4.08 |
| 02/15/98 | 3,222,551 | 466,188 | 6.91 |
| 01/15/98 | 2,987,835 | 364,447 | 8.20 |
| 12/15/97 | 2,272,762 | 236,373 | 9.62 |
| 11/14/97 | 2,145,400 | 446,296 | 4.81 |
| 10/15/97 | 1,987,164 | 363,864 | 5.46 |
| 09/15/97 | 1,827,982 | 217,944 | 8.39 |
| 08/15/97 | 1,720,142 | 165,239 | 10.41 |
| 07/15/97 | 1,297,995 | 424,207 | 3.06 |
| 06/13/97 | 1,011,109 | 509,207 | 1.99 |
| 05/15/97 | 25 | 6,029,815 | 0.00 |

S/A = *Shares Short / Avg Daily Volume*. This can be used as a rough measure of days to cover, or the number of days of average trading volume needed to completely sell out of all short positions. Higher numbers indicate that the market is full of short positions.

Usually when short interest is so high it is a clear indication of "lack of value". Shorting, due to its "unlimited downside" is mostly a professional game, and the large shorts indicate that Wall Street is well aware that AMZN is overpriced. Eventually every stock will come back to fair value.

Interestingly, and in seeming conflict (at first glance) with the statements above, it is likely that exactly this "short interest" is holding the stock price up. Since shares are scarce, the price stays high. The problem here is that as →

soon as the supply increases, due to any of: a split, an additional offering, or insider selling, the price will tank because shares of AMZN will then be quite easy to obtain, and Lord-a-mighty, one has now happened and the other two are both more than possible.

AMZN currently has 23.9 million shares outstanding (currently in the hands of investors.) One of the fascinating issues about AMZN is that 19.3 million of these are in the hands of "insiders". The 4.6 million shares the public can get at, or "float", are nearly all held as short positions.

Basically, Wall Street is aware of the small float in AMZN (just 3 million shares) and the unlocking of insider shares (19 million) that are coming to market.

In other recent news, Jeff Vinik, a well-known investment manager, has been adding AMZN shares to his portfolio. Vinik once controlled Fidelity's Magellan fund and was manipulating Micron. With Magellan he caused Micron to run up to an all-time high of 95, and then appeared on CNBS to recommend Micron as a buy. It later came out that at the time he was selling Micron. A lot of people sued Fidelity for his false remarks.

I think it highly probable that Vinik is building a boxed position in Amazon. Basically, a "boxed" position works like this:

First, you buy a lot of shares in a cash account and simultaneously take a short position in a different account for the same number of shares at the same price. The two positions offset each other so you have no risk, up or down. At the proper time you and others begin to dump your long stock *en masse*, the stock plummets. This leaves you net short in the stock as the price drops like a rock, then when it hits a target bottom, you cover the short and makes a killing.

Insider Selling

When the stock went "public" insiders (those stockholders who have a 10% or greater relationship to the company, or is an officer or director of the company) held 19.3 million shares. Jim Bezos personally owns more than 9 million of these. Most of the rest are held by the investment banks that took AMZN public, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Alex Brown and Hambrecht & Quist. These firms get paid by selling their stock. Other insiders include other management and/or anyone else affiliated with the company and/or its underwriters who took it public. There are probably at least 30 such parties. Once again, they are all looking to sell at least part of their holdings, as this is the only way for them to get cash out of the deal.

In order to keep the market makers and insiders from making an immediate killing when the stock goes public,

most exchanges install a "lockout" period, where the insiders can't sell the stock they own. The lockup period for AMZN ended in December of 1997.

What you should read here is that there are 19.3 million shares (pre-split) of AMZN desperately looking to get sold.

Creative Accounting

"Since inception, the Company has incurred significant losses and as of March 31, 1998, had an accumulated deficit of \$42.9 million." —AMAZON COM INC Quarterly Report (SEC form 10-Q) May 15, 1998

On May 8, 1998, AMZN borrowed \$326 million at 10%, and the first payment isn't due until November 1, 2003. When fully paid-out, this "loan" will be worth \$530,000,000 to the lenders. That is to say, AMZN must find \$530 million dollars to payback this loan between 11/1/2003 and 5/1/2008. That's 9.8 million dollars per month for 54 months, and it has to come out of profits.

Previously the company had borrowed \$75 million at junk bond rates, and then reported it as part of \$110 million in cash at the end of last year. The rest of their cash came from their dwindling IPO funds.

The \$75 million loan has now been paid back with the proceeds of the \$326 million dollar "arrangement".

You could pass it off as bizarre timing that they happened to be holding all the proceeds of a high interest loan on December 31, 1997. If you think it's just a coincidence, then they have been very creative indeed.

"I'll pay you to take it."

Based on my crude calculations, if you own AMZN, you own a stock that by June 18th will have a per share equity value of ...zero...

Amazon.COM's last annual report was issued March 31, 1998, and can be read at:
<http://www4.edgar-online.com/brand/yahoo/gdoc?choice=2-982494&nad=0>

Here are some numbers from that report to consider:

- 1/ S/H equity was \$19.827 million. (3/31/98)
- 2/ Shares outstanding were 23.311 million. (3/31/98)
- 3/ BA Robinson Stevens just adjusted loss forecast for Q2-98 to -\$0.98 per share.
- 4/ Based on 23.311 mil shares outstanding, they should lose about \$22,845 mil this quarter.
- 5/ Based on #4, losses are running at \$253,833 PER DAY in Q2-98
- 6/ At the loss rate of \$253,833 per day, all 19,827 mil in equity should be ERASED by the 78th day of the quarter.
- 7/ The magical 78th day falls about June 18th. By then, the per share equity value should be NEGATIVE and falling fast.

Based on Robinson Stevens' own figures, AMZN should lose a total of \$5.01 more per share in the 21 months from 4/98-12/99, giving them a NEGATIVE PER SHARE EQUITY VALUE OF ABOUT \$4.16 BY 12/31/99.

Conclusions:

At the end of the day, I believe that retailing is retailing, and the "location" of the Internet does not justify 12X sales valuations, especially when stocks like BKS sell for less than 1X sales) and even more so when the company has forecast yet another massive loss in 1998.

I also believe that growth, in and of itself, means nothing, especially with negative earnings. In addition, the high rate of growth for a company in its early stages cannot be extrapolated to later stages. Basic math tells us that it's easier to double \$20 million than to double \$130 million. AMZN can not grow at the same rate it has shown us in the past.

I believe growth on a percentage basis will decline, and the already low margins will decline as well, as competition increases. Add shares to the float (via a split or a possible second offering) and a forecast more quarters of negative earnings and AMZN has nowhere to go but down, and this stock will stay down for a long time to come.

I believe there is money to be made by shorting AMZN in 1998. Or, in the words of Dr. Gonzo, "Buy the ticket, take the ride."

HOGWiLD
VINTAGE CLOTHING

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Lingerie & Robes-Mini & Maxi Dresses-Blouses & Skirts-Capri Pants
Patterns-Handbags-Hats-Scarves-Eye Glasses-Gloves-Shoes
Go-Go Boots-Chinoise Dresses-Beaded Sweaters

For Him:
Sharkskin Suits-Ruffled Tux Shirts-Bowling Shirts-Hawaiian Shirts
Work Shirts-Guayaberas-Dashikis-Smoking Jackets-T-Shirts-Ban-Lons
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<http://www.fringeware.com/hitandrun>

by Paco Xander Nathan, pacoid@fringeware.com

Small furry mammals are cute. They're vicious too, in case you've never been bit by hamsters, or the like... With looks, brains, and attitude to match, it's no wonder our distant ancestors beat out those dinosaur wusses of the long-forgotten Jurassic era: our side was just more punk.

Likewise, just about when you think that retail book superstore chains are going to take over the Internet, their pre-fossil dung bubbles up to the surface: bad financial mojo, consumer scams (like spamming), federal labor law violations, publisher racketeering, anti-trust lawsuits, international corporate warfare, and all the basic nastiness you'd expect from creatures with breath like T Rex.

Send in the mammals.

Earlier this year, FringeWare became acquainted with a group called the Alternative Books Consortium, sponsored by an ISP in Los Angeles that has a number of independent bookstores and small press publishers as clients. We've been working with Tony Cappelli and crew there ever since to help promote the Consortium, by sponsoring their web ring. In their words:

"The Alternative Books Consortium is an Internet site where people can find alternative bookstores and publishers. It was started by L.A. Bridge www.LABridge.com and its associates in the bookselling industry who were disgusted by the onslaught of Internet 'superstores'. These corporate funded 'Chain-stores' represent a compromise to the reading public and are putting independently owned bookstores out of business."

Truer words were never spoken.

First off, the Consortium provides an alternative to online warehouses, e.g. Amazon. Each participating bookstore must have a real storefront as an independent bookseller, not some guy in a fulfillment house, i.e., you can still find people who know and love books, for a living.

Secondly, have you ever read about how "payola" and "playlists" historically permitted music industry mafioso to ruin American radio? Well guess fucking what: the same shit's been happening in the book industry. Barnes & Noble

and Borders/Walden have been caught with their hands in the panty drawer, by "inducing" publishers and distributors about what authors and titles will or won't be (dis)played on their (read: "most") shelves, subject of course to a small fee... You can read about *that* criminal activity in the American Booksellers Association web site. Back to the point, the stores in the Alternative Books Consortium want customers who read beyond the confines of "approved" title lists.

Thirdly, and I quote, the Consortium provides: "An alternative to mainstream ideas... We are not mitigated by shareholders and are happy to stock books with subversive topics." You can only find Jock Sturges, Mike Diana, or Peter Sotos, if so inclined, via independents these days.

Fourthly, these stores sport the same "selling points" you'd expect on some big monolith's e-commerce server, e.g. shopping cart systems, searchable inventories, listservs for email discussions, etc. However, these stores are locally owned, independent businesses—the DIY kind you're used to seeing in these pages. Small furry mammals which know how to keep warm and bite back in packs.

Okay, why should you care? Other articles featured in this issue of *FWR* bear witness enough, but again to quote the Consortium's manifesto: "These booksellers represent the extremes in their niche. Many are threatened by superstores that have moved in across the street from them."

Ditto. FringeWare had an online bookstore in the early 1990's, but we've watched booksales flow over to Amazon, ever since they floated a stock-market scam and got all that nifty IPO money to use for corporate advertising. Likewise, we had a B&N superstore move in three blocks down the street, not long after we opened the FringeWare bookstore, and we've been struggling to stay afloat ever since.

This isn't just sour grapes from FringeWare, either, because we've witnessed *most* of the independent bookstores which had sold our magazine, as well as some of the independent distributors, go out of business – just as P/E ratios for book industry stocks soared beyond any reasonable explanation. The most reasonable explanation is that the public is witnessing a complex new form of racketeering

based on the "information economy". The curious thing about this trend is that as independent bookstores dropped off our magazine shipping manifest, Borders and B&N superstores began to pop up in yellow pages in roughly the same general areas. And there has been a wealth of rumors about just how much interest these corporations have expressed in local city council affairs (read: "to induce zoning laws").

Meanwhile, more and more of the viable book distribution in the US has moved over to the hands of the privately held Ingram Book Company, of LaVergne, TN. Ingram is closely associated with the Christian Right (a major part of its business), and interestingly enough many "questionable" literary titles have begun disappearing from Ingram's claim of being able to order just about any book in print.

Nor is this "phenomenon" isolated to the US; both Australia and the UK are next in the queue for this invasion of the US corporate book industry interests. That is, unless the German corporate book industry interests arrive first.

What can you do? If you're involved with an independent bookstore, encourage them to join projects like the Alternative Books Consortium. For instance, the Consortium's web ring is open and free of cost for independents to join, worldwide. Instructions are available on their web site. Corporate affiliates need not apply.

Then again, if perhaps you like drinking bad coffee or listing to people in business suits lecture about youth culture or creativity, then by all means go kill time at Borders, because you probably enjoy listening to their infomercials on NPR already, anyway. Or maybe if you prefer the huge inventory and discounts available (for approved titles only, of course) stick with B&N or Amazon. If that's the case, you can ride that train all the way to Auschwitz, honey. Send us a postcard after you get out of the shower.

Alternative Books Consortium

<http://www.alternativebooks.com/>

American Booksellers Association

<http://www.bookweb.org/news/btw/990.html>

Book Industry Stocks

<http://www.fringeware.com/info/ticker.html>

Mark Nemmers' "No Borders" page

<http://www.dcn.davis.ca.us/vme/no-borders/>

From: P Nathan <pacoid>
Subject: re: Global Village Idiot
To: cappelli@LABridge.com (Tony Cappelli)
Date: Wed, 29 Jul 1998 11:17:33 -0500 (CDT)

Hi Tony,

That's really hilarious. If this guy actually did have any financial background, as he claims, then he'd be well aware that -- contrary to most folks' notion of "making money the old fashioned, American way" -- Amazon has posted consecutive losses each quarter for over two years, and their current "earnings" are -\$1.03 per share at a time when the boring stocks are doing absurdly well. Even the more optimistic of Amazon's proponents are published in the WSJ saying that the firm won't stop losing money until 2001 under the absolute best of situations, and even then only if monkey fly out of their butts. Most all of the major Wall St investment houses have seriously downgraded their recommendations for the stock, and lately the firm's insiders fight with each other over rights to sell short. Moreover, the stock has been cited in all the headlines lately as a canonical example of "new era" investment (read: "voodoo economics"), presumably due to their insane books discount policy of selling at a complete loss.

This guy will need much luck in his "free enterpiss"... stupid is as stupid does.

> Paco,
> I thought you might like to see the reply from
> the rejected webring applicant.
>
>>Date: Mon, 27 Jul 1998 21:38:43 -0700
>>From: "Alan E. Warmke" <awarmke@home.com>
>>Organization: @Home Network
>>To: Tony Cappelli <cappelli@LABridge.com>
>>Subject: Re: Webring Submission
>
>>Give me a break Tony, the only person that is
>>going to loose out with that kind of thinking
>>is you. I bet you think Microsoft is going to
>>take over the world also? If you are "opposed
>>to Amazon" it makes a lot more business sense
>>to just not click on the banner.
>
>>It's only a commerical or banner and if you
>>continue to disclude a group or an individual
>>because of this it will only hurt yourself.
>>Amazon however will continue to make money the
>>old fashioned, American way and even invite
>>everyone else to join in with there success.
>>I do have a degree in Business, and as an
>>American business person I believe in free
>>enterpise. If Amazon is making money, hey
>>thats great, thats what it's all about, my
>>website happens to include items most likely
>>not found at the Amazon site to create my own
>>niche.
>
>>I will remove your banners, but if you change
>>your mind, feel free to E-mail me anytime.
>
>>Sincerely,
>>Alan Warmke
>
> Thanks.
>
> Tony Cappelli [TC189]
> <http://www.LABridge.com/>

Media Thanatology

by Paco Xander Nathan, pacoid@fringeware.com

The publisher of this magazine, FringeWare, also operates an Internet site, which in turn hosts a number of media and arts collectives, including a special email list called the *Dead Media Project*. Several hundred people from around the world participate in this forum, which is moderated by a remarkable pair of science fiction authors and intrepid journalists known (aside from their actual names, not disclosed outside the Illuminati) as Bruce Sterling and Richard Kadrey. I managed to catch these two recently for a chat about *The Project*. Bruce lives just up the street from our store and drops by with a kiddo every so often to buy comix. RK also hangs out, during visits back home to Texas; we were lucky to catch him amidst a current flurry of work on film treatments, and a new novel...

fwr: Estimates place the Dead Media Project as having hatched circa the summer of 1995. How did you two start talking about it?

BruceS: We were just sitting around Kadrey's kitchen table exchanging memes.

RK: History already obscures itself. The way I remember it, we were hanging around the HotWired offices when the subject came up. I was whining to Bruce about something I was trying to find online (probably a dead web page) and that started a discussion of dead communication and fossilized techniques. But we probably talked about it at my house, too.

fwr: Was research and writing for *Holy Fire* the actual genesis for this project?

BruceS: Oh heavens no; though a lot of dead media issues did end up working their way into that novel, later.

fwr: Many would tend to associate Dead Media with techno cul-de-sacs, like buildings full of radio tubes, but we've seen pigeoneers, flower dictionaries, etc., come across the list. What are the weirdest media practices to have croaked so far?

BruceS: Probably Piesse's *Smell Organ* and the Cahill *Teleharmonium*, though in my opinion the ultimate Dead Media story is the frantic effort of Paris to communicate with the outside world while it was under siege in the Franco-Prussian war. Pigeons, manned balloons, microfilm, postcards, telegraphy, homing dogs, floating copper spheres; it's truly an epic tale.

RK: Aside from the ones Bruce mentioned (and I'm a huge fan of the *Teleharmonium*; I would die happy having heard a recording of the damned thing; allegedly, none exist, but there might be some forgotten 78 in someone's attic...) I'm also fascinated with the ancient sign language monks used after they'd taken a vow of silence. The UK book I ordered on the topic never arrived, so I'll have to try and order it again. Not the weirdest, but some of the most fascinating are those devices that spawned other devices. The *Camera Obscura* and *Theremin* both created clusters of other associated devices. Perhaps a theremin concert with camera obscura visuals would be a nice thing...

fwr: Have there been other famous Necronaut scholars in history?

BruceS: They wouldn't call themselves "Necronauts". Carolyn Marvin is pretty well known; her book *When Old Technologies Were*

New was an inspiration. Certainly there has been a lot of technological history written, and a lot of very valuable hobbyist and collectors work has been done in areas like magic lanterns, postal history, old office equipment, early cinema and such.

fwr: The Media History Archives seem the most complete online resource—is that a "Media Charnel House" to collect this body of work, or has it taken a more distributed approach?

BruceS: Kadrey and I aren't responsible for any of the website efforts. The stuff we collect is very wide-ranging and eclectic, mostly because we've never yet got around to fully defining either "media" or "dead". Somebody who could do that defining work would be in a good position to write a definitive book about the subject, but "Dead Media Project" *per se* is about gathering fieldwork and distributing it among anyone who wants it.

RK: This project is more about obsessive behavior than disciplined scholarship. We'd be investigating this stuff even if the Project didn't exist. The Project, however, allows other obsessives to contribute and receive info, and thus feed their habit. Their neighbors should sleep better knowing that these people are being kept busy and entertained by the work of the many necronauts.

fwr: From the web pages, it seems like quite a worldwide effort—the priority for "fieldwork" was mentioned early in the project—and now the URLs appear to be from a range of countries. Do different regions or nationalities maintain their own spin about Dead Media?

BruceS: We've got very good contingents from Britain, Canada and Australia, a sprinkling from non-Anglophone Europe and South America; but Asia and Africa remain dark continents for us. In my opinion, France has been one of the greatest national laboratories of dead media, though you wouldn't see the French laying a lot of emphasis on this.

fwr: How much international footwork have you two put into building this presence?

BruceS: None. The recruiting work is all accidental. I do travel pretty extensively and sometimes talk about Dead Media on the road, but there's nothing like an organized effort there.

fwr: Or did the concept of cataloguing Dead Media spread mostly through the Undead Media? ("machine ancestor worship", perhaps?)

BruceS: I think good old fashioned word of mouth counts for a lot here.

fwr: How has the Dead Media email list grown over time?

BruceS: We get occasional bursts of sign-ups when Dead Media stuff appears in other email lists, like *nettime* or *Red Rock Eater*, and sometimes we'll get a flurry when Dead Media gets mentioned in *Wired*, *Harper's* or *New York Times*. Now that we've got a pretty good archive going, we also get a lot of people who find us while doing search engine work for stuff like the Incan *quipu* or the *cyclorama*.

fwr: Listings on the Media History Project site provide a wonderful collection of "CourseWare" links, but are there any university courses being offered in this area?

RK: The fact that we haven't yet defined "dead" or "media" is important here. You might remember that there have been a number of discussions in the mailing list (and arguments within the topic on The WELL) about these terms. Devices such as the *astrolabe*, *orrery* and *quipu* aren't really "media" in the sense of transmitting information to a large number of people. However, these devices use and transform information on a small scale, so we've decided to leave them in the discussion for the moment. But it would be kind of tough to sell a university course that concentrated on both *Incan knot-tying* and, say, the originals of *mechanical television* (another favorite topic of mine; necronaut Trevor Black has done some really great research in this area).

BruceS: No, "dead media" is way too broad, foggy, and interdisciplinary a term for actual coursework. There are very large conceptual gaps between Neolithic *etched bone calendars* and the history of dead integrated chips. Try and teach that in one course, and you'd have the anthropology and electrical engineering departments going at each other tooth and nail.

fwr: A boundary has been set (for submissions, but not for discussions) not to cover dead human languages—are there other boundaries established in the forum?

BruceS: Yeah, we don't do dead musical instruments unless they have some kind of recording and playback capacity. And I've always been absolutely determined to draw the line at mimes.

fwr: The manifesto, *ISEA* speech, and archives taken together pose a silhouette for many interesting political questions—an array of dialectic, ranging from the Japanese "love of the lost", to a pragmatic need for media forensics, to a kind of Fritz Lang cautionary tale deconstructing the 1939 World's Fair and its cryptic totalitarian bent, to the romanticization of Montparnasse. Has a political agenda emerged in the process of executing on the Dead Media Project?

BruceS: You bet! We'll be launching our Dead Media *coup d'état* most any day now, to be followed by show trials and a healthy bloodletting of the decadent exploiting classes.

RK: Bruce said too much. Repeat it and we'll have to kill you and eat your corpse at one of our ritual dinners.

fwr: We've seen comparisons between the lifespan of machines and that of small furry mammals, e.g. hamsters. Is there any "half-life" emerging for media? Any kind of media physics theory emerging subsequent to the precursory science of media forensics and ontology?

BruceS: Well, there's *Moore's Law*; that pretty much covers the bases for anything calling itself "interactive", or "virtual", or "digital".

RK: The simple version of media lifespan laws can be summed up as: "Just because we have CDs, don't sell all your vinyl. And don't spend all your money on CDs, because music chips, with low frequency transmission to a receiver-embedded lollipop that you can hold between your teeth, which will use your skull as a resonator, will give you hours of enjoyment. Until something new comes along."

fwr: The original manifesto outlines this effort as a collective endeavor to write the "Handbook Of Dead Media", or a *Media Book Of The Dead*—do you know if anybody is authoring a title yet?

RK: The problem with putting all this stuff in a book is that we're distributing a lot of copyrighted materials internally. It would also be an expensive book to produce. It screams for illos and, god help me, some multimedia geegaws. I'd like to see a series of pop-up articles in slicker magazines, or naughty French dead media postcards.

BruceS: A couple of people have claimed they were going to pitch the scheme to a publisher, but I haven't seen them sign anything official. My personal feeling is that there are dozens of books to be written on these subjects. Without making much of an effort, I've already accumulated about fifty books on various aspects of defunct communications devices and systems: *magic lanterns*, *typewriters*, the *Apple Newton*, there's just no end to it.

And with that, we pause to consider where the current crop of media controllers will find their haunts in history, once their beloved mediums have gone the way...

Dead Media Project

<http://www.islandnet.com/~ianc/dm/dm.html>

best and most up-to-date site, with the best links —Bruce S

Dead Media Email List

Bruce Sterling <bruces@well.com>

only way to get on the list is to write me and ask —Bruce S

Dead Media Collector's List

Seth Carmichael <scarmike@tmn.com>

Forum Nokia - Mediorama

<http://www.forum.nokia.com/nf/magazine/mediorama/>

quirky site has some nice media archaeology —RK

Electronic Music Timeline

<http://meowing.ccm.uc.edu/~intro/timeline.html>

instruments, computing & entertainment devices —RK

Dead Media Manifesto

<http://www.mediahistory.com/dead/manifest.txt>

Dead Media Archives

<http://www.mediahistory.com/dead/archive.html>

BOOK STORE FOIBLES

by Clayton Counts, spacehitler@fringeware.com



What do you look for in a book store? Is it the Kanchenjunga-high, glimmeringly Hollywood-dependent, too perplexingly crowned with laurel pyramid-exhibits of John Grisham and Carl Hiaasen bestsellers? Or is it the supercondensed "diversitude" of extortionate selections from the excruciatingly unchallenging new-age, astrology, women's studies and other sexist alarmism/advocacy, role-playing, holistic nurturing, gay and lesbian fiction/resources, magic(k)al/mystic(k)al hokum, UFOlogy, occultism, dendrochronology, ethnic studies/white guilt, and yuppie "philosophy" sections? Or how about those tortoise-shelled, wire-framed, or Malcolm X-esque horn-rimmed glasses-sporting, inarticulately pseduopontificating high school/college students/graduates, haplessly peddling overpriced, egesta-“flavored” Starbuck’s cappuccino-poison whilst you anxiously twiddle your thickly callused pseudopodia, waiting in line behind countless, impatient NAMBLA members and public school teachers to aimlessly peruse the “controversial” material disorganizedly occupying the “alternative lifestyles” (i.e., S&M, bondage, voyeurism, body “art”, and fetishism) shelves?

Perhaps it's the biomagnetic allure of the chermerical, golden bargain which suckers you in. Maybe one of those clearance sales will feature a complete(ly boring) Charles Dickens, a Tolstoy primer, a Beat reader, or some such inane, cockamamie, motherfucking balderdash, which you can immediately pretend to have read by unattentively scanning the back cover for bold-type and committing key phrases to “memory”. How should I know what you desire in an “intellec(k)tual” haunt? ESP isn't real, after all. Nevertheless, two assessments are indefatigably certain: most book store employees don't know their inventory, much less the glorious contents thereof, and any implication that this is the case will usually earn you the unsophisticated reaming of a lifetime from some pemphigoid-nosed chumscrubber with pus-expulsing warts and a penchant for lowbrow, “literary” shock-porn. Of course, one cannot make a statement like this without presenting some form of at least jocularly diverting evidence, so—as always—I have gone to tremendous lengths to bring you, the indifferent reader, up to date on the state of shameless cerebral depravity so plaguing our nation's allegedly great book stores.

Borders Employee: Thank you for calling Borders. How may I help you?

Clayton Counts: Hi. I heard that Antonin Artaud was going to be doing a book signing next week.

BE: Who?

CC: Antonin Artaud.

BE: Hmm... that sounds familiar. Let me go check for you.

CC: Don't waste your time. He's a well-known author and he's dead. Buffoon.

Barnes & Noble Employee: Thank you for calling Barnes & Noble.

CC: I was wondering if Jacques Derrida and Philip K. Dick were doing a joint book signing this week. I heard that they were.

B&NE: I certainly haven't heard that, but I'll check for you. Can you hold on for a sec?

CC: That's okay... Philip K. Dick is deceased. How stupid can a person be?

Bookstop Employee: Bookstop.

CC: Hello. I was calling to find out if Marcel Proust was going to be doing a signing at your bookstore as part of his current tour.

BSE: I think so. Hold on.

CC: Nevermind. Proust is dead, not to mention famous. What an idiot.

Another Barnes & Noble Employee: Thank you for calling Barnes & Noble. How can I help you?

CC: Hello. I was wondering if Federico Lorca and Thomas Pynchon were going to be doing their annual book signing anytime soon.

B&NE: Yes... it seems like I read something about that recently. Let me go check.

CC: No thanks... Federico Lorca is long dead, and you're a saprophagic fool.

Book People Employee: Thank you for calling Book People. What can I help you with?

CC: Hi. I was curious as to whether or not Richard Brautigan was going to be doing a book signing at your store.

BPE: Let's see... um... I do not see him on our author list. Can you hold?

CC: Why not? (I held for no less than five minutes.)

BPE: Sir?

CC: Yes?

BPE: I couldn't find anything about it, but some of the staff here seemed to think he's coming.

CC: That's doubtful, I'm afraid.

BPE: Why is that?

CC: He's dead. Suicide. You should try it sometime, imbecile.

Yet Another Barnes & Noble Employee: Hello and thank you for calling Barnes & Noble. How may I assist you?

CC: Yes... I was wondering when Che Guevara was going to be doing a book signing. Do you think you could help me out?

B&NE: Seems like I read something about that recently. Can you hold for just a sec?

CC: No. He's dead. Goddamn, you're sallow.

Another Book People Employee: Thank you for calling Book People. How can I help you?

CC: Hi. Is Jack Kerouac going to be doing a book signing there?

BPE: That sounds right.

CC: No, it doesn't.

BPE: What do you mean?

CC: Jack Kerouac is dead. Are you really a "book person"?

Another Bookstop Employee: Thank you for choosing Bookstop. How can I help you?

CC: Hello. I have a few questions, if you don't mind.

BE: Not at all.

CC: I had heard that Samuel Clemens was going to be doing a book signing there in the near future. Do you know when that's going to be?

BE: Samuel Clemens? Let me check the calendar real quick.

CC: Okay.

BE: (Pause) We're not showing anything under Clemens.

CC: Hmm... that figures. How about Jerzy Kosinski?

BE: (Pause) No. I think I would've heard about that one.

CC: What about Paul Verlaine?

BE: (Pause) Nothing under that name, either.

CC: John Gower?

BE: (Pause) Nope.

CC: Moss Hart?

BE: (Pause) Sorry. No.

CC: Edmund Spenser?

BE: I've never heard of him. Let's see. (Pause) Nothing on the list.

CC: Well, thanks anyway.

BE: No problem. Sorry I couldn't help you.

CC: Well, it comes as no surprise. All of the people I mentioned are dead. Just so you know, Samuel Clemens is the real name of Mark Twain, you hickoryheaded gobshite.

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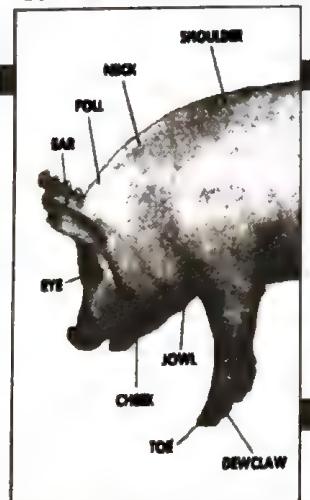
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by Don Webb
dwebb@fringeware.com

I am a vending machine repairman.

Not the most glamorous of jobs, most people are usually pretty ticked off when they see me, full of hate and venom at the loss of up to a dollar in change, and the missed Snicker's bar. I smile a lot, shake my head and give them their money back, and free candy.

Sometimes.

I like being on the road, going to little Texas towns, staying in cheap motels. It's like I don't have a boss. I always get to see new things—and frankly my stress is low. Nobody dies if I screw up on the coin return.

I was working north and east of the Dallas Metroplex. I was repairing some machines, checking on others. I had fixed a candy machine in Doublesign, Texas and I decided to take Route 33 east. It went through a little town called Comesee. I think that town had been named that in the last years of the Nineteenth century, when they were trying to attract the railroad.

I hit Comesee about noon. I was hungry, tired and thirsty.

It was a little town. There were a few stores on the outskirts, but I didn't see any activity, so I thought I would drive to the Historic Old Town section mentioned on a fading billboard. Three blocks of shops on a brick street. The usual shops you see in rural Texas, the copy/fax place that does computer banners, the Kung-Fu studio, the antique store, the restaurant. All were in buildings with fancy brick facades from the 1910s.

No cars were parked in front of any of them.

I walked up to the restaurant. The sign said OPEN, but the lack of light and presence of dead flies in the window said otherwise. I stood there a moment, stupidly, as if gazing hard enough would suddenly bring economic life to the restaurant. I could see the walls of the place, they were covered in bookshelves, with many ancient-looking paperbacks.

That's odd — must have tried to be bookstore at the end. I decided that I would check out the copy/fax place. They could tell me where I could get a burger and fries. The banner in the window read GO PANTHERS!! followed by several paw prints. They could use a fresh ribbon. I tried the door, no luck. I could see through the miniblinds, this store

too had bookshelves. Boy, these people were really bad at marketing.

I walked back to my van and ate some candy. I needed to take a leak, of course as quiet as this town seemed to be, I could just do it on main street. I couldn't imagine the place was really dead, but I wondered how close to it, it was. I walked to the antique store. I tried the knob, the door opened.

It was dark inside. "Hello," I yelled, "Hello!"

No answer. I headed toward the back, I figured I would find either the owner or the toilet. I tried *helloing* on the way.

What I did find were books. Now the usual antique crap was there—porcelain chicken and hens, fake carnival glass candy dishes, old nasty pipes that someone's grandfather had smoked, low beat up end tables, and lamps with huge shades—but all the shelves were full of books, and most of the tables were covered in books.

Now they were pretty average books. *Reader's Digest Condensed Books*, Stephen King, John Grisham, Tom Clancy, Rex Hull, old horoscope books, diet books. Nothing very remarkable.

I was right. The john was in the back. The ring of gray slime told me that no had flushed recently. Fortunately the plumbing worked. I decided this was pretty creepy, and besides, I had some work to do in Terrell, Texas.

"Jim? Is that you?" There was someone in the shop. It sounded like an old guy. I thought of hiding in the john for a few seconds, but then I headed out.

"No." I said, "I'm not Jim. I'm Frank Devviews. I just stopped in to take a leak, but nobody's here."

The old man—to the extent I could see him in the dim light—must have been homeless. The sun had burned his complexion a deep red, and years of alcoholism had taken their toll. His hair and eyes were a both dirty gray. The former plastered and greasy, the latter bloodshot. His flannel shirt and his yellowed t-shirt looked a little too warm for early summer. I couldn't tell what color his pants had been. I could smell booze and a kind of sick smell from about ten feet away.

"Ain't nobody here. Nobody but me. And you, if you're really here." he said.

"I'm really here." I said, "But I need to be movin' on."

I started past him. This wasn't my scene. Hell, I don't even watch the *Twilight Zone*.

"It was the books that got 'em." he said. I was almost out the door, when curiosity overcame common sense.

"The books?"

"Books will kill you. It was a little thing at first. Bob got this paperback *The Planet of the Future Dead* by Austin Osman Emme. Bob ran the Fax R Us store. He bought it in Fort Worth. He loved it. He had one of them satellite thingies —got 384 channels. He said that little book was better than anything on TV. He lent it to Sue, who worked at the diner, and she let her husband read it. Before long everybody was reading."

"That don't sound too bad." I said.

"You don't know. You weren't here. You may not be here now."

"I'm here."

"Says you. Everybody was trading their books. Sue had been in the Stephen King Book Club, so she was the queen of the trades, till Bob drove into Fort Worth and bought a shitload of used books. They was all reading. Ruining their eyes, screwing up their backs, getting fat. I tried it for a awhile, but it didn't take me over, that was because I hadn't read *Planet of the Future Dead*. That's what made 'em crazy. Sarah Jean put up a sign, that she'd accept one hardback or two paperbacks for a cup of coffee or a slice of pie at the diner. Then everybody put up signs like that—used books became the only currency. People would drive into Dallas or Fort Worth and bring back books, every weekend. All people did was read. Old man Miller's house burned down, because the whole volunteer fire department was reading."

"So literacy killed the town?"

"Books killed the town. Ralph was the first one that disappeared. One day he was just gone. He may have been gone for awhile. He was the postman, but everybody was so busy reading that they didn't notice him not coming around, until the power company shut off some places for non-payment. Nobody could find Ralph. There was a big town meeting, last time people really roused themselves from reading, I reckon. They finally found him. He was a minor character in a western novel he'd been reading. Oh, at first people thought it was a coincidence, but then there were others. They be gone, and you'd find 'em in romances or horror novels or thrillers. People tried not reading for a while, but that reading jones would grab 'em, give 'em cold sweats, and so forth. They would wait till their husband or

wife was asleep and decided to risk a few pages. I held out. Somebody kept leaving a copy of *Planet of the Future Dead* in my arms when I was asleep, but I held out."

"You said that I might not be here, what did you mean?"

"We had some trouble with minor characters from books showing up, tempting people to read, giving copies of *Planet* to kids. That's what was worst, them kids killed by books, killed or off in another dimension."

"If all this happened, why didn't you leave?"

"Look Mister, I'm a bum. Where would I go? Now I own the whole damn town. It's all mine. In fact, you should leave before I throw your sorry ass out."

He began cussing and threatening, so I moseyed on to my van and drove off.

I saw that he had left a copy *Planet of the Future Dead* on the passenger seat. Pretty good prank. Scared the hell out of me, when I first saw it, but as I drove back through Doublesign, I calmed down.

It's been a long time since I've read any science fiction. I read some Asimov and Bradbury in high school. I think I'll dip into it tonight.

Motel TV don't have HBO anyway.



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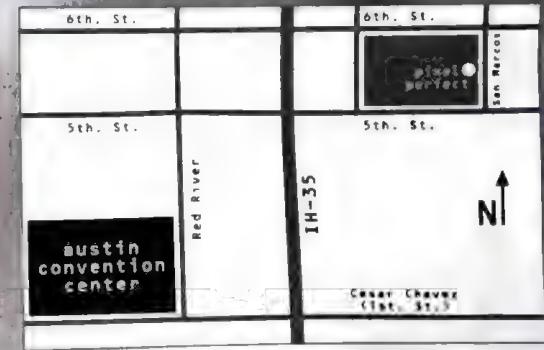
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Bibliomania: A Kinder Madness

by Doc Hambone, hambone@fringeware.com

*"What wild desires, what restless torments seize
The hapless man, who feels the book-disease."*

—John Ferriar

Terminology

The term *bibliomania* was first used in reference to Richard Heber (see below), by friend John Ferriar, in a poem, and fellow book collector Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, in a book. It refers to the obsessive collecting of books and printed material. It is distinguished from *bibliophilia*, which is sometimes used as a milder form of the mania, but usually refers to the love of reading books, as opposed to collecting them. The bibliomaniac is typically unconcerned with the contents of the books; indeed, in most cases it would be physically impossible to actually read even a portion of a bibliomaniac's massive collections, and their use could damage the pages and binding. As author and bibliomane A.N.L. Munby notes, somewhat ironically, "reading them is hardly necessary. Any don will agree that in some occult manner knowledge can be imbibed merely by sitting with half-closed eyes in a room lined with books. For the most part, however, I just look at them or take them down and stroke them from time to time. Book-collecting, I would have you know, is a full-time occupation, and one wouldn't get far if one took time off for frivolities like reading."¹

As with the sexual fetishist, the bibliomaniac often has a specialization: manuscripts, first editions, association copies (books owned by famous people, usually writers), texts with a particular typeface or binding. "Inchrul" Brewer carried a ruler with him on book-hunting expeditions and bought only those that fit certain dimensions.² Some go so far as to collect only old bibliographies, library and archive catalogs, and book auction manifests.

Case Histories

Richard Heber: Born in England in 1774, and independently wealthy when his rich father died. His collection grew to over 150,000 volumes, many of the same titles. He had often said that everyone should have three copies of every book: one to read, one for the library, and one to lend to friends. By the end of his life he was a total recluse, and

died among his books, which by now had overflowed from the shelves to be stacked to the ceiling in every conceivable space. A total of eight houses and mansions filled with books in several countries were eventually discovered.³

Sir Thomas Phillips: A rich English landowner who bought a large portion of Heber's stock after his death. Phillips collected not only rare manuscripts and medieval texts, but government documents destined for pulping. Amazingly, many of these scraps of paper later proved valuable, and even the letters and household notes he hoarded provided the basis for the five-volume *Phillips Studies*. His obsession soon caused his fortunes to dwindle, and he eventually fled creditors to the continent. His father-in-law helped him settle some of the debts, but the mania deepened. His wife turned to drugs and died at 37, then Phillips remarried for his new bride's dowry. He moved again, ruining an estate destined to be inherited by his son-in-law, Shakespearian scholar and book thief James Halliwell. He died in a book- and rat-infested mansion at the age of eighty, but his descendants continue the cataloging and sales of his collection to this very day.⁴

Don Vincent: A monk who looted several monastery libraries in Spain during the 1830's. Years later, working as a bookseller, he was out-bid by Augustino Paxtot for what was believed to be the only copy of *Furs e Ordinacions*. Paxtot later died when his house caught fire, and Vincent was arrested when the book was found in his possession. His lawyer presented another copy of the book, found in Paris, to prove that the text was not the only one in existence. This tactic backfired when Vincent freaked out, crying out "Alas, my book is not unique," and he was hanged.⁵

¹ Munby, Alan Noel, *Essays and Papers*, The Scolar Press, 1977, pg 41

² Weiner, Norman, "On Bibliomania", *Psychoanalysis Quarterly*, 4/66, vol 35, #2, pg 219.

³ Michell, John, *Eccentric Lives and Peculiar Notions*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984, pg 153-156.

⁴ Michell, pg 156-162.

⁵ Weiner, pg 218.

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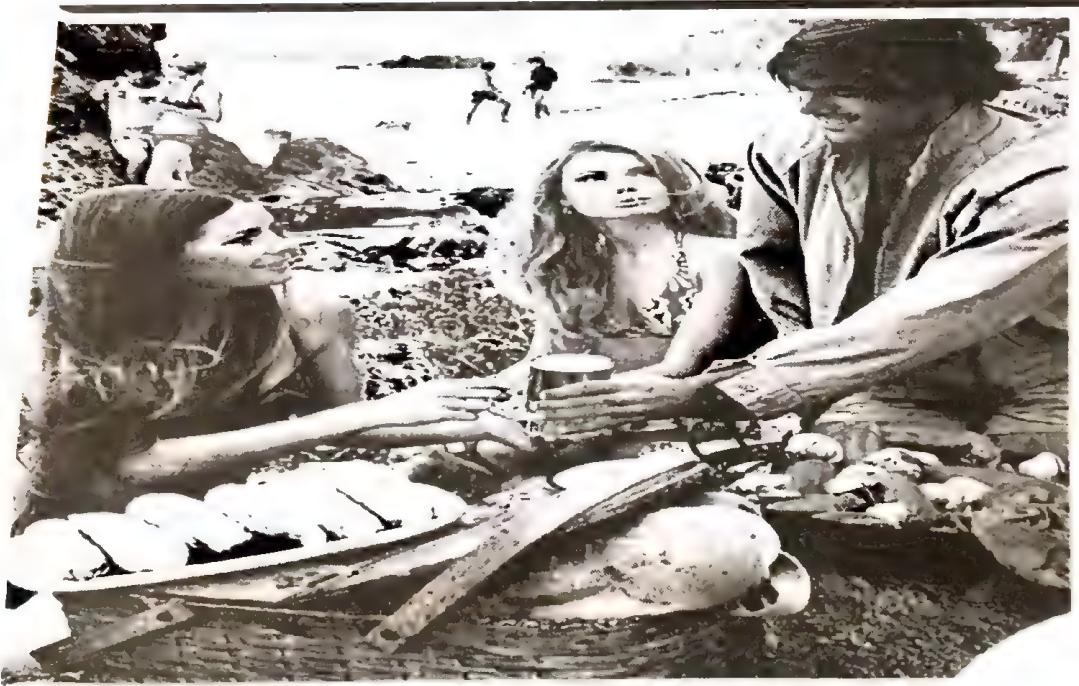
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The Myth of the Great American Bookstore

- Elegy & Usufruct -

by Scot Casey

**“Whenever books are burned
men also, in the end, are burned.”**

—H. Heine, Almansor

Taking the title here to task, the question immediately poses itself in two particular ways: (1) Is there a Myth? And (2) is there such a thing as the Great American Bookstore?

myth: 1: a story that is usually of unknown origin and at least partially traditional, that ostensibly relates to historical events usually of such character as to serve to explain some practice, belief, institution, or natural phenomenon, and that is especially associated with religious rites and beliefs; 2: a story invented as a veiled explanation of the truth.

—Webster's Third New International Dictionary

It is worth noting this ambivalence of the word *myth*, a telling sign in itself. That the second case is the more predominant opinion is evocative of the inherent cynicism of our times. But to a dog (*kynos*), philosophy is perhaps best expressed in a bone and not in a book. Nevertheless, after spending the better part of my life working in bookstores, from cookie cutter chains to avant garde independents, the lineaments of the Myth refuse to dissolve. I'll be the first to admit that it may simply be an inherent quality of information to gather around particular archetypal narratives; Platonic ghosts and utopic traces haunt all places where books abide. Still, in the tired and true voice of many a hardcore booksellers, I have heard the Myth of the Great American Bookstore told in one form or another—most often, sadly enough, as elegy. Once there were great herds of buffalo... and bookstores in Old New York and Chicago and San Francisco filled with such titles that would have made the Librarians of Babel laugh out loud.

“By this art you may contemplate
A variation of the letters

The Anatomy of Melancholy
part 2. sect. II, mem. IV



Which brings us full face to the question of whether or not there is such a thing as the Great American Bookstore. (I imagine to a European, the consideration of such a question is answer enough.) I have no doubt that there exists such a beast. However, the fear is that it may be on the verge of extinction as the Dinosaur Super-Stores suck dry the market environments and reproduce with amoebae-like voracity and sameness; evolution reversed and gone horribly awry. But the Great American Bookstore can still be found in such places as City Lights, Hungry Mind, the Tattered Cover, and Powell's in Portland—to name only a few personal favorites. Other booksellers often speak of these places as points of pilgrimage, ignoring the Rocky Mountains and the Golden Gate Bridge to wander amongst the sublime shelves of books. As alluded to, there is something of the ruin in the experience these days. But the experience is still vitalizing and crucial. I will never forget the experience of walking into City Lights, after having worked in a Chain Bookstore for a couple of years, and thinking: “Yes, here, this is what it should be: an authentic and living presence of books.” It felt as if I were walking through a cathedral, filled with monuments of culture. Returning to the place where I worked, it was as if I were on a Hollywood movie set, the books seeming like clever paintings on the wall, mere scenery for the banal drama of Capital.

*“I am the firste foole of all the holy nauy, to kepe the
pompe, the helme and eke the sayle for this is my mynde,
this one pleasoure have I of bokes to haue grete plentie
an aparayle I take no wysdome by them...”*

—The Book-Fool in Brandt's *The Ship of Fools*

I realize the folly here of trying to tell the Myth. I know that Methusela probably measured his 969 years with a shorter rule. And Homer's ancestors were more likely scraping knuckles than pulling stars from the skies. But in the dark times, I would reckon myself a greater fool to bite my tongue than wag it. So here is the Myth of the Great American Bookstore as I know it. Hopefully, it is still recognizable to a few.

In most cities of a certain size in the United States, clustered typically around the centers of information and learning, you will find the sellers of books and their stores. Because of the nature of books, the labor that goes into the making such things of beauty, there is not much *material* profit to be made from the selling of them. So you find that booksellers will make their stores in older buildings where the rent is cheap, requiring only that there is a good roof and adequate light. Old rundown houses, second-story lofts, old laundromats, basements, "modeling studios" and cavernous warehouses are all standard places for the booksellers to set up shop in.

You walk into such a place and immediately sense a unique character to the place. The way the books are organized (or not) on the shelves, the unmistakable smell of paper and ink, the music playing, the way the sections are labeled, the notices around the front counter, the style and placement of the chairs and tables, the titles that have been chosen for display and review, all of these qualities give rise to the understanding that there is a great reverence and love for books and the worlds within their pages. Every great bookstore has its own distinct personality, its own peculiar set of interests and obsessions. As you look over the titles that comprise such general sections as fiction or philosophy or history, you can recognize the intellect and spirit behind it. It is the quality—not the quantity—of the selection that impresses. Paths of deep and concentrated reading stand out like hieroglyphs, with many side paths, wanderings, charming meanders, also revealing themselves. There are even jokes, juxtapositions of titles that playfully subvert each other. And as you make your way along the shelves, a dialogue begins to form between you and the books.

Occasionally, there are subdued but animated conversations amongst the customers or staff, but most often there is a charged silence, a space in

which the music of the Word can unfold. When you do engage those booksellers attending to the place, you discover an individual whose life has been lived, to a great extent, inside the Word. Initially, the only responses you might get will be to direct you to a particular title or to indicate whether or not something can be ordered. But the mention of such names as Rilke, Holderlin, Borges, Dahlberg, Read, Gass, Steiner, or Merton will create a spark in the eye, a sudden apprehension, as if you were the long lost member of a secret society and had just given the password. Ah God, it is sweet to recognize a fellow reader, to recount mutual travels through the infinite landscapes of the written language, to revive enthusiasms for the well known wonders and exchange confidences for those works only a few have ever heard of.

You go into the Great American Bookstore the well read and world weary Ecclesiastian and leave renewed and full of hunger for the world with the Word and the Life upon the pages of the stack of books in your arms. A reciprocal relationship has formed between you and the place—vital and challenging—that has *nothing* to do with money or marketing. The Great American Bookstore is a living thing, a felt presence that engages you as a good friend. And you and a host of others return on a regular basis, weaving your own Pulse into the place as books you have suggested thread through the selection, another voice in the ever deepening character of a vital center of your community. I say community because it is less suspect than culture. Nonetheless, culture is what forms: a shared sense of tradition, of inheritance, of responsibility and duty to those books that have shaped, reformed and revolutionized the world—and the Word. The Great American Bookstore exists as a center of a book culture that encourages every reader, common or uncommon, to engage, celebrate, question and give answer to the most central and primary texts of our world—what might be called “the Canon”. What underlies all such texts is the idea of duration: books that have been treasured for a thousand years and will continue to be cherished for a thousand more. And it is more than a little disturbing to ask how many of the “bestsellers” from the last couple of decades will endure. Community, the culture of books, works both ways: books that endure require readers that can recognize those qualities of endurance.

“Where did the idea of conceiving a literary work that the world would not willingly let die come from?”

— H. Bloom, *The Western Canon*

Thus, the Myth of the Great American Bookstore. It seems such a simple thing. And you would imagine that every major city would have at least several such stores of books. Certainly around any College or University, you would expect to find shining examples of the Great American Bookstore. And while this would have been true thirty years ago, it is less and less the case today. The rise of Multimedia Conglomerates with deep and interlocked pockets has turned the book industry into big business in which quantity and profit outweigh quality and culture. I hasten to add that there still exist many great bookstores. But for the most part, they are struggling. The Superstores, like clever reptiles, have learned how to mimic the physical tropes and outward shapes of the Great American Bookstore and appeal to the most common denominator. But the chemically enhanced aroma of coffee, comfortable chairs and couches, indirect lighting and polished wood bookshelves filled with every book in print cannot hide the cold blooded, impersonal and willfully ignorant heart lurking within the core of it. Midas wept in his golden and worthless world. And it is well known that it is meaningless to gain the entire world without a soul. And all these Super and Mega and Monster Stores where the books are framed only as so much wallpaper, where the employees are only efficient robots, and the opinions of the *New York Times* create unseemly piles of pabulum, these places are the epitome of soullessness. But in this sad and superficial Age of Entertainment, they thrive like grotesque pustules on a rotting corpse. And the Great American Bookstore becomes more of a myth and less Mythic.

“There is a secret, poser's disgrace in loveless reading, just as there is in any instant of our lives when we are not remembering of Much, and our passions are a rubble and slain stones instead of the scars on Aaron's breast-plate.”

—Edward Dahlberg, “How Do You Spell Fool?”,
The Leafless American

What is to be done? Daily, as I sit amongst the books of this store, I ruminant upon possible answers. Is it possible in this culture of Mammon to convince others that less is more? That bigger is not better? It has been said that elegance

is the balance of beauty and power. Where is the beauty in a place that sees books only as another widget, as something to fill the shelves and build into pyramidal displays of stupidity? As Neil Postman has often pointed out, Huxley in his *Brave New World* saw that there would be no need to censor or restrict any information because it would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. A stroll down the aisles of any Superstore will confirm Huxley's prophecy. And they are all the same. In every city, all across the country, the Superstores offer the *exact same experience*. The sections, the bestsellers, the displays: all identical no matter where you go—just like McDonald's. And about as fulfilling. Is this really what people who love books want? Not bookstores but giant temples of fashionable titles recently harangued by this week's talking head or tied-in to the big TV show or big movie, all “page turners”, all “compelling” and “unable to be put down”, all ephemeral, not worth the pulp they are printed on. Fashion is indeed the mother of death.



*“The reader does not meet the book casually or in disarray. He is dressed for the occasion, a proceeding which directs our attention to the construct of values and sensibility which includes both 'vestment' and 'investment'. The primary quality of the act, of the reader's self-investiture before the act of reading, is one of cortesia, a term rendered only imperfectly by 'courtesy'. Reading, here, is no haphazard, unpremeditated motion. It is a courteous, almost a courtly encounter, between a private person and one of those 'high guests' whose entrance into mortal houses is evoked by Holderlin in his hymn 'As on a festive day' and by Coleridge in one of the most enigmatic glosses he appended to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. ”*

—George Stiener, “The Uncommon Reader”,
No Passion Spent

It is tempting to want to place a fair weight of the blame upon the publishers, almost all of them whoring for a handful of mega-corporations. But they are, after all, merely serving the needs of the masses. There is no getting away from the simple fact that the publishers of fashionable crap and the Superstores that sell it are making a fair amount of money (not necessarily profit). They "process" huge numbers of shiny happy customers every single day—a fraction of which would keep most independent stores thriving. But the Superstores are easy and convenient, linked in to the rest of mass(ively) media(ted) culture. Obviously, this is what most people want. But how many "uncommon readers", those who read deep and wide, are being seduced by the big, new, easy, convenient, unchallenging, non-threatening, sameness of the Superstores? I would venture to say quite a few. And I believe that if anyone can be held responsible, answerable, for the decline and death of the Great American Bookstore, it is this "uncommon reader".

When I worked in a Superstore, I knew many "uncommon readers". Typically, they read at least a book a week. They read a healthy mix of fiction and non-fiction. They actively engage the books, criticizing those which fail to live up to expectations and celebrating those that do. Often, the books that they are looking for have to be ordered specially. And while they will always peruse the New York Times Bestsellers, only rarely do they buy from that pre-packaged selection. But they have been enchanted by the Superstore aesthetic of convenience, failing to recognize that the book culture that they so love is being actively shrunken by the Superstore chains, unwilling to recognize the "filters" that restrict controversial and challenging books from the shelves. What will it take for the "uncommon reader" to become dissatisfied with the Superstores and seek out a bookstore with a distinct character and simple elegance, with an informed and considered selection that honors those books that have endured for centuries and seeks out those that will? For without the "uncommon reader" the Great American Bookstore will become only a sad remembrance of golden days that are no more, a myth. And if we are only left with a world of Superstore sameness and stupidity, then we are left without a culture.

"The statistician will register a growing progress, and the moralist a gradual decline: on the one hand, a progress of things; on the other, a decline of souls. The useful will take the place of the beautiful, industry of art... and arithmetic of poetry. The spleen will become the malady of a levelling age."

—Amiel

Barnes & Noble Doesn't Trust Anyone Under Five and a Half Feet Tall

by B. Jones

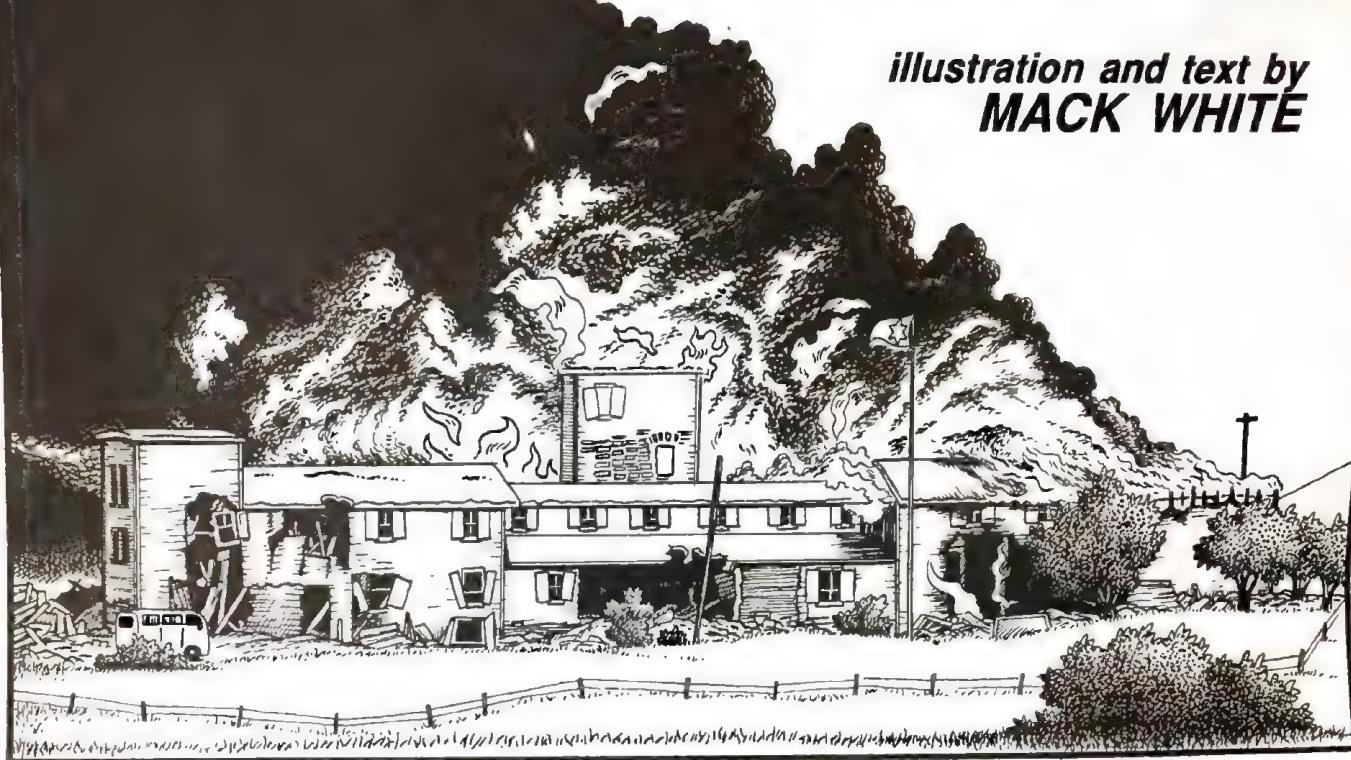
Operation Rescue, an extremist Christian group, recently staged a series of demonstrations in front of Barnes & Noble Bookstores across the country where they spasmodically destroyed copies of Jock Sturges' *Radiant Identities*. Foaming at the mouth, they decried B&N as peddlers of child pornography, citing Sturges' work as the primary example. B&N admirably recited the First Amendment and refused to remove it from their shelves. However, once the case went to court in Tennessee, B&N (predictably) caved in to pressure from the Christian extremists' demands. B&N agreed to keep the books above five and a half feet on their shelves and not to display more than a portion of the cover. These are the same oddball requirements that the state of Tennessee has for all material considered "obscene". Thus, while not explicitly stating it, B&N effectively labeled Sturges' artful and critically admired photography "obscene". Obviously, this set a disturbing precedent.

One wonders what other special interest groups are now going to realize that they can pressure Barnes & Noble into censoring certain titles as "obscene" or "troubling" or "challenging"? Perhaps the Aryan Brotherhood can get the works of Martin Luther King removed. Or maybe other Christian groups will object to such "pagan" subjects as Buddhism and Hinduism? And the real question is: why would Barnes & Noble give in to these idiots? And further: who else will the give into—or have they already? If a bunch of intolerant Christian inbreds can make this much of a difference, you've got to wonder what effect the CIA, FBI, and NSA have been having for years.



WACO, VINCE FOSTER, AND THE SECRET WAR

Illustration and text by
MACK WHITE



In the year after the famous fire at Waco, I became acquainted with the surviving Branch Davidians. It was through a friend of mine, Richard Mosley, who produced the documentary *Day 51: The True Story of Waco*. One week before the first anniversary of the fire, Richard invited me to attend a private screening of his documentary at a private home in Waco. In attendance were about a dozen Davidians, including Clive Doyle, Sheila Martin, and Wally Kennett.

I found these people to be—well, just that—people, not the fiendish “cultists” described by the mainstream media. They were a quiet lot, not at all pushy with their religion, and seemed, more than anything else, sad and puzzled by the way they had been demonized by the government and the mainstream media.

They told me how, during the previous year, they had all been interviewed by a woman reporter from ABC’s 20/20. They had told her everything, and she had seemed excited by what she heard. “Be sure to watch,” she told them. Yet, when the story aired, they were dismayed to see their interviews had been severely edited. All the “good stuff”—the stuff that would incriminate the government in mass murder—had been left out. The reporter called them the next day to apologize. It was not her fault, she told them. It had been her producer in New York who had censored the story.

Fortunately, *Day 51* was not subject to censorship. Among the things dealt with in that documentary was the FBI sniper fire which killed many Davidians as they ran out the back of the burning building—the side facing away from the television cameras. Yet, at that early date, there was no hard physical evidence of these shootings—only the testimony of the surviving Davidians.

However, since then, another documentary has appeared—*Waco: The Rules of Engagement*. In that film, infrared video taken by a surveillance helicopter circling over Mt. Carmel Center during the fire, clearly shows the sniper fire, as well as tanks firing incendiary devices into the building. Here is the proof that was needed.

One thing not dealt with in *Rules of Engagement*, however, is the cause of what happened in Waco. Yes, we get an explanation, but it is the standard one: It was funding time in Congress, the ATF wanted to put on a big show, things got out of hand, mistakes were made, etc., etc. But is that really all there is to say about the matter?

Day 51 interviewed the Davidians on this question, and received a surprising answer. It came from Wally Kennett, who stated that the ATF was, in actuality, not looking for an illegal arsenal when they raided Mt. Carmel on February 28, 1993, but rather for information stored on a computer. This information had

been compiled by two Davidians—Jeff Little and Wayne Martin—both of whom were killed in the final assault, on April 19. Furthermore, Kennett states that it was this computer, not guns or anything else, that was kept in the room which the ATF attempted to enter on the morning of the raid.

Jeff Little was known by the Davidians to have been a "computer expert" who had previously been involved in a shady project to modify some sort of law enforcement software to contain a "trap door". At the time *Day 51* was produced, this tidbit of information meant nothing. However, in the years that have followed, new information has emerged which gives it a great deal of meaning.

The Octopus, Secret Government and the Death of Danny Casalane, by Kenn Thomas and Jim Keith, is one of several books to emerge recently which detail how the Reagan Justice Department stole PROMIS, a law enforcement software, from the firm INSL-AW, and modified it to contain a "trap door". PROMIS was then sold by the government to various entities, such as foreign intelligence agencies. From the moment this software was installed, the trap door allowed outside monitoring of all of that agency's computer transactions.

It has also been alleged, by many writers, that Vince Foster, the late White House Special Counsel, was involved in this scheme. Supposedly Foster, a law partner of Hillary Clinton's, had for many years been an operative of the National Security Agency, and that it had been under his supervision that PROMIS was modified.

Foster died under mysterious circumstances shortly after the fire at Waco. Many have doubted the official version of his death—that it was a suicide—and have pointed to a considerable body of evidence indicating murder. Yet, even among those who accept the official version, there is disagreement over why Foster would kill himself. The most common explanation is that Foster was a sensitive soul who, with the Travel Office scandal threatening to engulf him, could no longer endure the cruel world of politics and so bade farewell not only to Washington, but to life itself.

Another explanation comes from Foster's own widow, who stated, in an Associated Press story, that Foster's death had something to do with Waco. According to her, he felt responsible for what happened in Waco, and that is why he killed himself.

If it is true that Foster was involved in the modification of PROMIS, and if it is true, as the surviving Branch Davidians claim, that Jeff Little was involved in the modification of software which sounds suspiciously like PROMIS, then it would seem we have found our link between Foster and Waco.

Many have alleged that Mt. Carmel Center was an intelligence front of some kind. For instance, the minister of a rival Davidian church in Waco told me that, under Koresh, it had been a bio-warfare factory. This view was shared by lawyer and "Patriot" Linda Thompson, who in a *Penthouse* interview, alleged it was a CIA facility, and that the ATF raid was orchestrated by the FBI, acting in alliance with Israel's Mossad, to shut it down. And yet, there is no evidence of such a factory.

No, if espionage was going on at Mt. Carmel, it is more likely to have been of the computer variety—and we need look no further than Jeff Little for our culprit. Now, the next question: What could have been the nature of the information stored on his computer?

The *Wall Street Journal*, *London Daily Telegraph*, and other publications have reported that, during Bill Clinton's governorship of Arkansas, cocaine was smuggled by the CIA into the Mena airport. Clinton is alleged to have received a hefty amount of cash for looking the other way. According to investigative journalist Sherman Skolnick, Foster was spying on Clinton and had tracked the drug money into an offshore account. If that is true, it makes sense that the actual hacking would have been done, not by Foster himself, but by a lower level operative, a "computer expert"—someone like, say, Jeff Little.

In the documentary *Waco: The Big Lie*, video footage of the raid on Mt. Carmel appears to show three ATF agents being killed by "friendly" fire. We see the agents enter the window, leaving a fourth agent on the roof. He then sprays the wall with machine gun fire. Many believe this was when the three men died, and many think it deliberate.

If so, what makes it all the more perplexing is that these three dead agents had all been personal bodyguards of Bill Clinton's during the presidential campaign. Furthermore, shortly after the fire, a story circulated in Waco that, during a campaign stop there the summer before, these three had accompanied Clinton to a barber shop where he received a haircut from a barber who was a Branch Davidian. The five are said to have had a long, private conversation.

Could the information on Jeff Little's computer have been the subject of that conversation? If so, then that strange incident during the raid takes on the appearance of one faction of government (Clinton's) attempting to retrieve the information, while another faction interferes with that retrieval.

The infrared video footage featured so prominently in *Rules of Engagement* is believed to have been leaked by William Colby, former director of the CIA. Shortly after this leak occurred, Colby died under mysterious circumstances. He had, during the last few years of his life, been involved with Strategic Investments, a group responsible for many of the exposés on Vince Foster and drug smuggling at Mena, Arkansas.

What we can see here is the outline of a big story—a secret war between two factions of government. But don't expect it to be covered in any but the most sanitized form by the mainstream media. They will only give you a few pieces of the puzzle, while withholding the key pieces that would make it all fit. So, events like Waco and the mysterious death of Vince Foster are made to seem random, disconnected from each other, when in fact they are surface eruptions of a serious, covert power struggle.

Mack White is a writer and artist whose work has appeared in such publications as *Details*, *Heavy Metal*, *PULSE!*, and *Gnosis*. His comic book series, *Villa of the Mysteries*, is published by *Fantagraphics*.

NAFTA, Mexico, and the giant footprint of *El Norté*

by Patrick Deese, patrick@fringeware.com

Footprints

It doesn't take long to see the changes that NAFTA has wrought on Mexico. Right at the borders, you start to see the familiar names of companies such as Chrysler and Sony shining from large low slung buildings, *maquiadoras*, stretching alongside the roads that lead to the US interstates.

But it is perhaps the more insidious invasion, the invasion of US products, brand names, and US retail outlets that show where the plans and money really lie in NAFTA. Every large city will have them—Seven Eleven, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Wendy's, What-A-Burger (a Texas chain), Price Club, Sam's, and Walmart. Every city, large or small will show signs of the Name Brand invasion: Pepsi and Coca-Cola (in fact a generic term for a soft drinks in Mexico is *una coca*), Doritos, Lays, Fuji, MTV, the Discovery Channel, and the Fox Network. Granted, many of these items made their appearance here many years before NAFTA was even a twinkle in the eye of some greasy-palmed Senator trying to make sure he was going to get re-elected.

You can't really ask people what they did before the arrival of Price Club and Walmart. Most just sort of shuffle their feet and smile with the barest hint of embarrassment. The truth is that before, shopping in Mexico was a bizarre hodge-podge, where even looking for a simple thing that any American would take for granted, like shower curtain hooks, might become an epic adventure not seen since the quest for the Grail. Some may argue, to a lesser extent, that this is still true.

It's true that the fast food restaurants are full of shining faced Mexican youths happily eating, or even more strangely, to American eyes, happily employed, their immune systems unable to resist the corporate version of "For God and For Country". In Mexico, when you become part of the corporate family, the pull is much stronger—here your family is an important part of the infrastructure. Most children continue to live with their parents (and their grandparents) well into their twenties, or even later. Maybe after a few more years the media barrage will allow a callous to form over the naiveté of the Mexicans. The "Generation X malaise", much hyped by the American media, wasn't able to sneak across the border, apparently.

My Spanish tutor, Lourdes, told me that about 10 or 15 years ago, most Mexicans didn't like the taste of Coca-Cola, and that outside of Mexico City, it didn't sell very well. In fact, she still thinks it has a fishy aftertaste. Thanks to heavy advertising and celebrity endorsements, however, Coca-Cola is now the bestselling *refresco* in Mexico.



Nihil Obstat

One of the more "interesting" aspects of Mexico is the willingness of the government to work with the corporations and smooth over all the official red tape and bureaucracy that seemingly hinders the opening of a new US-based businesses, almost on purpose. Usually, this takes the special attention of a small number of high level bureaucrats. Oh, and one more thing—a fair chunk of money. In Mexico, it is a given that all public officials will, in some

ways line their pockets—but the good ones won't rob the country blind. By the way—remember the red tape? It was designed expressly for that purpose.

One European entrepreneur I talked to told me that 6% of his fiscal outlay is devoted to *mordidas*, the "bite". That's City, State and Federal. He grossed over 7 million pesos last year. About \$830,000 in American foldable. When I asked him how he could afford to stay in business with such a large chunk of money going out, and what would happen if, for example, he stopped paying them, he just grinned and told me I had a lot to learn about Mexico. It doesn't take much to get the official stamp of approval here for a business, so long as you're not talking about money.

Another phenomenon of the epic bureaucratic shuffling that occurs here is that, very frequently, a business might find competitors where none had existed before. According to one anecdote, a US grocery store chain, whilst in the midst of scaling their paperwork mountain, found that one of the bureaucrat's families had started up their own grocery store chain.



Adaptation and Survival

An interesting aspect of the US fiscal invasion of Mexico is the adaptation of the corporations to the Mexican market. In the US, there is no Frito-Lay brand of *chicharr-nes*—that's tried porkskins to you and me. In Mexico there are little snack bags of them right next to the other chips. Where else would they be? Then again, there is the Coca-Cola company's new soft drink "Manzana Lift", basically apple soda. Except that for many years a Mexican company has been producing "Aga", an apple soda, and kicking the pants off of the other sodas on the market. Well, we can't criticize them for making a competing flavor, can we?

Another effect of all this is the fading of the traditional siesta closure of businesses. Generally, most businesses (except restaurants) are closed between 2 and 4 pm. You find this less and less frequently in the larger cities, and never in the US based businesses.

Mexico's society has been based for centuries on the concept of neighborhood markets, and corner shops. The onslaught of the giant corporations has been happily crushing the life out of these "mom and pop" establishments, with bright, flashy stores with gleaming aisles of merchandise.

It is doubtful that many of these stores are anything but loss leaders for their North American investors at the moment, but that is simply the short term view. What it seems the corporations hope to accomplish is nothing less than a cultural revolution, but is it a revolution when it has a 20 year plan? The changes have been billed as the "long needed modernization" of Mexico, in the official channels. But whether they were needed or not, has yet to be seen.

Retired Money

What does NAFTA really mean for Mexico? There are more jobs, and all in all, that must be a good thing. Like anywhere else, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The problem is that in Mexico, the differential between the very poor and the very rich is borderline to obscenity. Situations like that cannot last very long. They reach a boiling point and build pressure, and eventually will explode.

I'll assume that you are fairly unfamiliar with the situation in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Forgive this flippant summary, but for the interest of space... Basically the indigenous peasant population there has been fighting for more autonomy, and trying to get out from under the political grip of the Mexican ruling class that has been working hard to leech every drop they can out of Chiapas that they can. The peasants started fighting for their freedom. Well, the ruling class didn't like that too much of course, and "masked men" have been massacring villagers, since they haven't been able to stop the guerrilla fighters. The guerrillas call themselves *Zapatistas*, after the historical Mexican revolutionary war hero and martyr, Emiliano Zapata—incidentally a great benefactor of the peasant population of Mexico.

In fact, Zapata is so revered by Mexico that his portrait was very recently placed on the 10 peso note. Funny thing happened, though, when these *Zapatistas* started making trouble. The government decided to retire these bills in favor of a 10 peso coin, due to "inflation". The 10 peso coin, by the way, doesn't have any portrait of Emiliano Zapata on it. They haven't been making the bills for a couple of years now, and most of the ones still in circulation look like they've changed hands a thousand times. Sometimes the frontlines of a war are very subtle.

NAFTA - Here and There

While the labor unions complain about US jobs going south, and the character of Mexico metamorphs to something more akin to *El Norte*, what is really happening? The giant firms—Sam's, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Chrysler and many, many more—all take a hunk out of the hide of the people. The Americans lose jobs, the Mexicans lose culture and so everyone loses, right? No, actually the winners are the big corporations, happily making the choices and the changes that Supply and Demand dictate. Yes, NAFTA made everything easier, all right, easier for everyone but you and me.

*Fragments of a Dirge for *Radio Silence**

by Justin Hurzeler, justin@fringeware.com

"[Isaiah 7:18] God whistles, the only time He does so in the Bible. Not because He's happy, but to summon ravaging swarms of flies and bees".^[1]



:In the skinwalker seasons of night, I retreat to the clandestine zones of radio silence, hushed areas of smoke and shadow; the time of assassins:

(Narrator: That will take care of overtures and prologues for tonight.

You'd think we were warming up

To something slightly mighty in the way of melodrama, Magniloquent with love and hate, with sacrifice and sin, repentance, and with sound effects:

Or else you'd think that we were mobilizing moods To make way for an epic chronicling a war:

But no:

But neither:

As we said before,

We're here to talk of radio.

Who knows who may be listening? And where?!^[2]

In the age of the internet, many of those with access to a computer, or at least a television, might consider radio an outmoded form of media. In the first-world, we tend to forget the large segment of the world's population not afforded the plethora of sensory input that modern technology allows. We tend to forget, for instance, that most of Africa relies solely on radio for the dispersal of information—or, more often, government propaganda—as do many other areas of the world.

Radio provides an affordability and intimacy unique to its medium. While visual stimulation is arguably a more commonly dominant form of sensory information, the voice

remains a primary conveyance of hypnotic suggestion, and few methods can compare with auditory sensation when it comes to mood induction. Rudolf Arnheim, in his essay "In Praise of Blindness", describes the unique properties of radio quite succinctly.



For the essence of broadcasting consists just in the fact that it alone offers unity by aural means. Not in the external sense of naturalistic completeness, but in affording the essence of an event, a process of thought, a representation.

Small wonder, then, that over 95% of radio broadcasting throughout the world is controlled by those most likely to abuse that control; even so-called 'co-operative' or 'community' radio stations are often dependent on financial contributions from a variety of sources, many of which can be traced back to corporate sponsors or government grants, and commercial radio is blatantly profit-oriented, as anyone who has twirled a dial can attest. In May of 1998, *The Nation* reported on the fact that, since the Telecommunications Act of 1996, major media conglomerates have entered into a feeding frenzy of radio stations, offering independent owners substantial, sometimes ludicrous, sums for small, community-oriented broadcasting stations, in an ongoing effort to gain dominance in the mass media market.



The danger inherent in this confined control of radio broadcasting should be obvious, but the solutions to the problem remain limited in their scope. Short of Federal regulation, a sluggish and often incomprehensive possibility at best, the answers fall to a small group of people willing to battle daily for small, independently-owned licensed stations, and an even smaller group willing to deliberately transgress FCC regulations to offer original, non-corporate sponsored content: pirate radio broadcasters.]

:In dreams, the Temple of Static breathes, reverberates, its walls hungry with voices. We walk through eddies of sound, infiltrating the silence, to see the towers burn, and burn, and burn, girders charring and falling like paper angels in the flames:

Sheep, we live in a time of accepted somnambulism, too often resigned to a humble standard of communication and dissent. While it's tempting to nurture the romance of insurrection and subversion, one would think that we would be better served in the long run by a more efficient distribution of information resources, a system that would allow those with a sincere desire to reject profit or power in favor of increasing the value of radio as a social resource an avenue of opportunity. But if the seductive motivation of outlaw expression is removed, how many broadcasters would have content of value to broadcast? Would we doom ourselves to a bland menu of crap in which any monkey with a couple of bucks and an hankering for an anonymous spotlight could fill our drums with sand and glue? The problem is, we won't know until we try it, and we deserve the opportunity, even if only to exercise our ability to fuck up.

:Turn the dial, a long dark wave of jagged sound, true communication, incomprehensible and resoundingly intimate on the deepest levels, jangling the planes of air and atoms in a ladder of nerves and frequency:

We are deeply anxious about the feelings of the subjects. However, it is according to the dictates of time and fate that we come by enduring the insufferable and suffering which is insufferable. Having been able to govern and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, we are always with you, our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity. Beware most strictly lest any outbursts of emotion, which may engender needless complications, or any fraternal contention and strife, which may create confusion, lead you astray and cause you to lose the confidence of the world. Let the entire nation continue as one family from generation to generation, ever firm in its faith in the imperishability of its divine land, and mindful of its heavy burden of responsibilities and the long road before it. Devote your united strength to construction for the future. Cultivate ways of rectitude, further nobility of spirit, and work with resolution, so that you may enhance the innate glory of the Imperial State and keep pace with the progress of the world.[3]



RADIO CLANDESTINE

[In 1997, Federal Courts made an unprecedented ruling in the case of Stephen Dunifer and Free Radio Berkeley, a Berkeley/Oakland based micropower station founded in 1993, vs. the Federal Communications Commission. Judge Claudia Wilken decided in favor of Dunifer and FRB, denying the FCC's motion for permanent injunction against the station, and further deeming the FCC's regulatory structure to be unconstitutional. This is one of the first instances in which the US legal system has publicly acknowledged the hypocrisy inherent in FCC regulations, which defines any person broadcasting without a license as transgressing the law, while simultaneously disallowing the possibility of obtaining broadcast licensing for stations broadcasting at 100 watts or less. The large majority of micropower broadcasters, many of whom are restricted by their equipment to broadcasting in a small area, often on unused radio frequencies, broadcast using less than 100 watts. Furthermore, FCC licensing ordinances and fee schedules make it impossible for anyone lacking enormous financial resources to meet the requirements for broadcasting licenses. Judge Wilken's decision was, in many ways, a precursor to a series of changes on the horizon of radio broadcasting legality. ▶

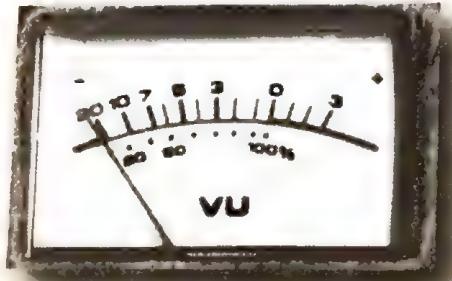
Currently, the FCC is reviewing petitions, under the auspice of its new chairman, William Kennard, that, if implemented, would undermine the FCC's notorious hospitality to corporate interests, and provide equal access to the broadcast spectrum among all levels of broadcasters. Of course, it remains to be seen whether any effective results will come of the petitions, or how long it would be before results could be perceived.]

: throats unreeling the strands of their discontent, spools of resonance careening through space, loose and sonic, a defiant tide of electric ventriloquism for the mute, dumb, and voiceless;



I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow—a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

**"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"** [4]



[For the time being, any person with a little motivation, technical skill, and around \$1000 dollars, can set themselves up to broadcast low-power radio, albeit outside the boundaries of the law. Most of the equipment needed (a transmitter, antenna, and microphone are the most essential items) can be readily obtained from retail stores and mail order suppliers, and technical advice abounds in the form of books, magazines, and internet resources. There are currently thousands of such operators throughout the world broadcasting either sporadically, or on a regularly scheduled basis, many of whom provide alternative sources of news and information, or present perspectives that would otherwise receive little voice in the mass media format. Many resistance organizations and movements, such as the Zapatistas, IRA, or Palestinian Intifada, maintain illegal or quasi-legal broadcasting networks, but the independently-motivated pirate broadcaster remains the most predominant on the scene.]

: I sit and sing myself a Christopher Robin dirge
marching to the sirens and screeches of the city
the mobbing of metal crows
and I hear your voice come home across the long wires
of air:

[1]: fr. Ken's Guide to the Bible, Ken Smith, Blast Books.

1995

[2]: fr. "Seems Radio is Here to Stay," a broadcast by Norman Corwin on the Columbia Broadcasting System, April 24, 1939.

[3]: fr. Emperor Hirohito's Imperial Surrender Broadcast, reprinted from Japan's Radio War on Australia: 1941.

—S. L. D. Meo, Melbourne University Press, 1968.

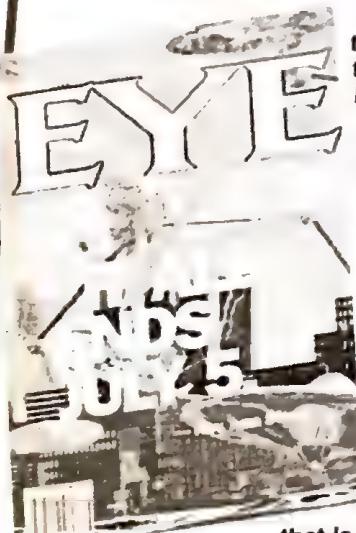
[4]: fr. Treasure Island, Robert Louis Stevenson.

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UnConventional Phenomena

by Rev. "Daev" Hellshaw
daev@fringeware.com

Probably few *FWR* readers are still unaware of the existence of *Fortean Times* (The Journal of Strange Phenomena), but for the uninitiated, let's start with explaining what the word 'fortean' refers to; the philosophy of Charles Fort (1874-1937), a New York scholar who devoted his life to the study of anomalous phenomena and criticism of scientific dogma. *FT* has grown from a tiny newsletter first published 25 years ago by editors Bob Rickard and Paul Sieveking, to what has since blossomed forth into an internationally distributed colorful monthly magazine.

For the last few years, *Fortean Times* have seen fit to invite forteans worldwide to their London-based 'UnConvention', a two-day event in the University of London, habitually converged upon by a stampede of X-Philes and skeptics, cryptozoologists and psychologists, explorers and scholars, drinkers and thinkers.

The weekend of April 24 and 25 1998 was no exception to this paradigm of London-bound migration, treated as we were to the likes of Mark Chorvinsky (*Strange Magazine*), who pontificated on grim reaper visitations and the elusive thunderbird photo—a case of a false memory phenomenon tangled up within an enigma, if I am unmistaken. Also present was the unequivocally charming Doug Skinner, who regaled us with the head-wrecking dilemma of whether—or not, as the case may be—the Count of St. Germain(s) ever did exist, and meandered through the life Richard Shaver—The Father of Hollow Earth Mythology.

Colonel John Blashford-Snell was on hand to tell us about the 'Beast of Bardia'—the giant elephants which discovered in the forests of Nepal, and Dr. Jan Bondeson wandered through tales of naivety and trickery in his talk 'The Fish Boy & the Cat Woman—Monsters & Marvels in Maternal Impressions'—referring to the curious practice of blaming prodigious births or physical deformities on impressions received by mothers during pregnancy. UFO writer Jenny Randles gave forth on her theories surrounding the mysterious Men In Black, whom she reckons are some kind of governmental double-bluff...

There were a legion more speakers—but this is not the place to discuss the fine toe-clippings of each blathering—see the links below for more.

It should be understood that when attending the UnCon, a certain amount of alcoholic beverage is sure to be imbibed, leading to late morning starts for the haphazardly appareled delegates, with their shaky hands, dry skin and black coffees. Luckily, the bar's situation, close to the lower hall, ensures a fine medicinal range of 'hair-of-the-dog(ma)' options and concoctions. On Saturday morning—Day 1 of the fortean marathon, many members of the *forteana email list* were recovering from the effects of what has become variously referred to as the 'UnDrinking' or the 'UnPissup', held in some pub-or-other the night before.

This aforementioned nocturnal carry-on (and that dreadful midnight omelet) is guaranteed to lead to a mild day-long attention-deficit, which results in less seminar-attendance, and far more garrulous shenanigans in and out of the various hallways, lounges and stairwells, book signings, the fairly notable book stalls, the psychic testing carried out by The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena, and sorties out to see the mummified cadaver of Jeremy Bentham, founder of the University of London.

Even so, this is not to say that the talks and seminars are arid unamusing affairs—far from it. Doug Skinner's rendition of two songs by the alleged St. Germain—with cello accompaniment—was an earful to behold. The hilarious Jon Downes and Graham Inglis of the Centre for Fortean Zoology had the audience writhing in the aisles in response to their madcap capers in search of the chupacabras—the goatsucker of Puerto Rico.

The shameful farce surrounding fortean supergroup 'Alien Spawn' implicated John 'Magonia' Rimmer and Rob Irving on Drums, Joe McNally of *Fortean Times* on bass, Mark Pilkington (also of Magonia) and myself on guitars, trombones and harmonica, lead by Maestro Peter 'The Duke' Brookesmith, who roped us into assisting him theatrically during his lecture on 'Martian Cats'. Although we gave an almost 10 minute performance, we didn't a screed of an instrument, and didn't know what the hell we were invisibly miming to...

The weekend came to a bleary eyed finale on Sunday evening, with the inauguration of the Charles Fort Institute, which plans to be the world's leading resource for scholarship and research in the understanding of strange experiences and anomalous phenomena.

Two of the best of days of my year, to be sure.

Charles Fort Institute

<http://www.forteana.org>

Fortean Times

<http://www.forteantimes.com>

International Fortean Organization

<http://www.research.umbc.edu/~frizzell/info>

Fortean Times Unconvention '96 Review

<http://www.fringeware.com/hell/barry/unconv96/index.html>

Fortean Times Unconvention '97 Review

<http://www.fringeware.com/hell/barry/unconv97/index.html>

Fortean Times Unconvention '98 Review

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no51.html>

<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no52.html>

Strange Magazine

<http://www.strangemag.com>

Alien Spawn – rocking space with the ETH blues

<http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk/uncon.html>

Magonia Magazine

<http://www.magonia.demon.co.uk>

The Centre for Fortean Zoology

<http://www.eclipse.co.uk/cfz/>

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<http://fringeware.com/hell/forteana/unpissup/>

Fortean Email List

Send a message to majordomo@primenet.com with the words 'subscribe forteana' as the text of your message.

FringeWare Event Report

by Sinista Minista
lsimon@fringeware.com

Quasar Hernandez—reading/rant/signing party

Friday, 6 March, 8 pm

Inside the store, tension was building along with the stench. A tub of tallboys, several platters of hors d'oeuvres, and about forty smelly enthusiasts had come together to christen the first FringeWare Friday evening event. Paco greeted the group and said farewell to Patrick, a familiar face behind the FringeWare counter. Patrick had retired from his duties as "purveyor of pop subculture", a bittersweet occasion, though any bitterness over his departure was offset by the sweetness of seeing a Fringeway-farer so excited about moving to Mexico to work on a novel. Once the formal introductions were over, Dr. Hernandez captured the audience with a passionate reading from several sheets of lined notebook paper that contained excerpts from his most recent publication, *It Only Hurts When I Kill*.



The good Doctor chose to break up his quasi-meaningful and organized thoughts-on-paper with impromptu outbursts. Audience members exploded with laughter according to their respective abilities to follow without a lexicon, cheering at the concluding points of Dr. Hernandez's soliloquies. Everyone drank up until crumpled tallboy cans spilled out of the trashcans.

Kim Hewitt, author of *Mutilating the Body: Identity in Blood and Ink*, with photographer John Davis

Friday, 27 March, 8 pm

Kim Hewitt's booksigning and discussion promoting her book, *Mutilating the Body: Identity in Blood and Ink* provided another FringeWare Friday evening event for the drooling masses, ranging from graduate students to the prominently pierced. The focus of her talk was self-mutilation and the pervasiveness of this taboo practice in all levels of society today. Considering these "punishments" as attempts of the flesh to force "feeling" in the mind, Ms. Hewitt likened self-mutilation to popular forms of self-construction and deconstruction: tattooing, piercing, and eating disorders. Reactions were mixed, but the following question and answer session proved that these issues are very much alive in the pop-cultured minds. Also, the discussion brought out the difficulties that come from trying to pin down desires long enough to analyze and compare their source(s). The erotic black and white photography by John Davis was hung from the rafters providing evocative visual testimony.

for current event listing, check:
<http://www.fringeware.com/event/>

Bicycle-Day Celebration

Thursday, 16 April, 8 pm

In celebration of the first documented, self-induced LSD experience, appropriately named Bicycle Day after Albert Hofmann's famous bike ride under the influence, FringeWare provided pitchers of Kool-Aid and stocked the tub with Lone Stars. FringeWare staff had sorted M&M's by color (thank god someone did), and set out a most peculiar array of foods: colored sugar cubes, sweet-tarts and altoids. Drop Cycle, with DJ DMZ and guest Anathema Enterprises, spun a mixed set of acid house, industrial noise, and acid-dub. Low bass beats and smooth transitions from cut to cut made for a sonically powerful event and a righteous tribute.

Commoner 3.0 Release Party/ Preverts Performance

Friday, 17 April, 8 pm

Releasing the third issue of the *Commoner*, a local rag, to the public, its contributing members set up a display table with complimentary copies of each issue. Notable better looking than their kin, about fifty of the new issues found their way into the hands of FringeWare supporters. To the live music of the Preverts, many a booty shook and shimmied. The tub full of Lone Star tallboys had to be restocked on several occasions throughout the night. There was dancing on the display tables, the eating of cuttlefish gelatins and locust-honey pies—quite an intoxicated reverie come to life. According to unreliable sources, new issues of the *Commoner* will come out bi-monthly. Future release parties are in the works.

Vincent O'Brien Video Exorcism and TV Turnoff Week Mass TV Destruction

Friday, 24 April, 8 pm

In the back alley behind the FringeWare Store, flames lit up the evening sky. TV's were more than simply turned off—they were executed with extreme prejudice. Burning TVs were thrown from the roof, as members of the crowd took turns demolishing them with sledge hammers. A "random spark" caused the pile of debris to ignite—which wasn't so good since the pile had been drenched with lighter fluid. Sirens began to wail in the distance which led to the flaming evil boxes being extinguished and immediately tossed into the dumpster. By the time the Austin Fire Department arrived, they had nothing to do but be perplexed and perhaps amused. The crowd then moved inside to watch the Video



Exorcism, a screening of two films by Vincent O'Brien. The first was *The Philosophy: An Experimental Monologue with the Violent Mind*, which was a candid and revealing 17 min documentary featuring the

SIGHTINGS



actor James Bennington. The camera focused on Bennington's head throughout, the metallic resolution suggesting an infra-red vision of some twisted corner of hell. The actor shared bitter memories of a mother ("a whisky drinking whore who spent more money on booze than food for the family"), a humorous portrait of a whiney ex-girlfriend, tales of the working life, and a variety of other charged personal sentiments. O'Brien's second film, Slaughter: A Journey through a Texas Slaughterhouse, as the name suggests, was a dispassionate 22 min descent through a "cow-processing factory". The tempo of the film was steady and slow, evocative of the subject matter—the mechanized murder of cattle inside a chop shop. After being compacted to death, the beasts get hung on a moving line until they are bled, stripped and "portioned". Many people stepped outside, a bit sickened, to get a breath of fresh air. The third round of the night's entertainment was a performance by a techno-industrial-acoustic band which included O'Brien on guitar, Dee on guitar and synthesizer, and Thor, from the Swans, on drums. The ambient video was a collection of early home films of O'Brien as a child. The band's music, born of over-exposure and industrial guilt, fit right in



when paired with innocently blissful images of childhood. So go destroy all of your TVs except one so you can still watch videos such as these.

[Contact Vincent O'Brien: athletiks@fringeware.com]

Indiana / Rough & Tumble—Friday, 8 May, 8 pm

The stacks were packed for this double-punch of live music. Noticeably missing from the crowd on his birthday celebration was the writer Thomas Pynchon. No matter, the party went on without a hitch. Rough & Tumble took the floor with a presence and sound that disintegrated the boundaries between natural and fashioned beauty. Pre-programmed drum beats and synthesizer laid a solid bed for songwriter John Reuter's (keyboardist for The Primadonnas) tight electric guitar licks and rhythms. The duo's uninhibited mix of girl/boy vocals proved luscious and balanced; I always knew I'd see that girl in a band someday. The halogen-hiss coming through the amps made me want to see this act again on a soundsystem that would enhance rather than muddle the Rough & Tumble sound. Indiana followed, headlining this show and pumping out a tight set of well crafted songs with strong vocals and a lot of balls. It was just what the doctor ordered. Each member (drums, bass, two guitars) displayed confidence and technical finesse, delivering tunes that were both engaging and exciting. Tight as hell, this band works very well together. The bassist told me after the show that they will be releasing two 7"s and touring the Midwest and East Coast soon. Keep yo eyes peeled.

[Contact: Indiana, 1204 Fairwood, Austin, TX 78722]



Hair Ball

by Shermakaye Bass
sbass@fringeware.com

Interesting what the cat drags in. Mangled birds, baby squirrels, fleas, stinging nettle, vibrating underwear, cake, the head of Louis the XVI, hair balls. Hair balls, well. There's a buzz-killer. Carpet gets fucked and you don't—because when it's all said and done and your cat stops gagging, the nube you just dragged in has suddenly vanished. Definitely a buzz killer, hair balls. You gotta wonder where the hell they really come from. Which leads to abstractions on the idea of hair and balls.

Recent research into the regurgitations of big-cats leads me to the conclusion that there are hair ball digressions of which we plebes know little—orbs more palatable than the garden variety coughed up by Sylvester. Entities more digestible, more photographable and infinitely more profitable. It's all a matter of word play, really. Lose the gastro-intestinal implications and think literal, as happens on rare occasions at the Lawndale Art Center in Houston.

Six years ago, the underground performance/exhibition space hatched the notion for the Hair Ball, a sweetly twisted spoof on big hair, high society and big bucks. It was an ingenious concept—a parodic fund-raiser/masquerade party for the struggling organization, which had been ousted from its warehouse digs on the University of Houston campus. (Presumably, the chancellor grew nervous about art involving nudity, propane, anarchy, scary paint—truths held self-evident by right-brainers). As right-brainers do, Lawndale constituents got creative. They threw a Hair Ball, and it went over like an aerosol net of Paul Mitchell on a perfectly coiffed River Oaker's *tête*. That is, the Houston socialites loved it. They loved the theme, so embedded in their Texas psyches—“*The higher hair, the closer to God*”—which tapped all sorts of convoluting truths held sacred by the German-car crowd. And they threw money at Lawndale. They also threw money at costume shops, fashion designers, hair stylists, caterers and silent-auctioneers, and created what has become known by *People* magazine, that purveyor of tabloid truths, as “One of the best parties in America”.

With each year, the phantasmaglom of mousse and hair and ego beehived. The paparazzi swarmed. In past years, Oprah RSVP'd. *Vogue* came calling. Columnists from all over the state arrived, giddy with *bon mots* and aminomethyl propanol fumes. This year, Parisian documentarian William Klein came with a film crew clad in Dallas Police Department t-shirts. All sang the praises of Texas hair and Houston's self-deprecating humor.

Actually, the hype has merit. At the recent *soirée*, which netted \$55,000 for Lawndale, hair reached stratospheric levels of absurdity, as arts patrons, journalists and cause-célébre gadflies promenaded through the mezzanine of Two Houston Center. They picked at paella and wilted greens, and atop their shoulders, they bore migraine-inducing tableaux. Miniature revolutions, guillotined heads, doll-size furnishings and Versaille gardens. Inspired by the theme “*Let Them Eat Cake*”, they invoked the excesses of Marie Antoinette's pre-revolutionary France, wearing period dress

far too impractical for the swamps. The women bustled up in brocade hoops and capes and hand-held fans, while the men preened in velveteen jackets and knickers that would never see a country club golf green. Most wore celebrity-stylist wigs, although a few sported their own tortured locks.

Cutting wide berths across the dancefloor, they howled through the night—swapping tales of who'd done whose hair, who'd spent the most hours in a salon and who'd had the most difficulty getting into their cars. Occasionally, I got wind of conversations involving art and Lawndale, but the lion's share of patrons spoke of this year's hair, last year's hair, and the year before's hair. “Remember that woman with the tornado on her head?” a powdered wig said to a birdcage. “Oh yes,” came the reply, “And what about the lady whose stylist did a replica of the Prince of Hamburgers sign?”

Of course, there was much ado over Klein's camera crew, a group of bewildered Frenchman whose mandate it was to travel the country documenting “pre-millennial Americana” for the photographer's forthcoming film, *The Messiah*. The project, I'm told, will layer Klein's images with a running score of Handel's *Messiah*, as interpreted by various American chorales. Looking alternately haggard and lecherous, the Parisians were fresh from Big D, where they'd filmed a Messiahanic performance by the Dallas Police Department Choir. Hence the DPD shirts. Hence another level of weird Texas surrealism. Perhaps the DPD's love for the *Messiah* has something to do with thin blue lines and absolution.

But no such unpleasantries sullied the mood at the Hair Ball. This was one of the best parties in America, for crying out loud. Department store CEOs, real-estate developers, stock brokers and oil-catters were there to observe the follicular follies. Nothing heavy except for the fashion accoutrements and the roast-beast buffet.

I observed the follies in good company—spent the better part of an hour chatting with a federal judge for the Social Security Administration, who had a wicked flair for sarcasm. Watching the pageant with bemusement, he was disappointed with the spectacle: “There are no live animals in the hair. I thought you were required to wear at least one ferret and two raccoons. This is tame. We used to bring our own blood supplies in case.” His honor was understatedly dressed in black tie and balding pate.

The encounter was heartening. A subversive judge—rarely a bad thing. But if there had been awards for best “witticisms”, I'd have nominated London/Houston fashion designer Vanessa Riley, whose costume concealed an unlikely trump: “Would you like to know what I'm wearing?” She asked, not waiting for my reply. “Remote-control vibrating underwear.” Proudly, she placed my hand on her crotch as the buzzer went off. She was being paged. “My boyfriend's got the remote.” The last I saw of Riley she was headed toward the elevator—bound for a different sort of *tête-a-tête* than the society Hair Ballers had in mind.

As for the artists who initiated the event, they were noticeably absent. If you consider that most were unable to cough up \$150 per ticket or \$1500 per table for the ball, then it also follows that the peasantry were engaged elsewhere—somewhere on the fringes of downtown Houston in their studios. Perhaps sitting in front of their swamp fans, eating cake.



LOST IN SPACE

Directed by Stephen Hopkins

Written, or at any rate typed, by Akiva Goldsman

John Robinson: William Hurt

Maureen Robinson: Mimi Rogers

Major Don West: Matt LeBlanc

Dr. Smith: Gary Oldman

Judy Robinson: Heather Graham

Penny Robinson: Lacey Chabert

Will Robinson: Jack Johnson

I realize that a review of this flick is about as superfluous as the movie itself, but as a Serial Parent I don't get out much any more, and having written a couple of books on fantasy film, I get a little embarrassed when people find out I'm thirteen behind on recent big stupid movies. So I got a rare pass from the wife and was almost bubbly to find myself in an actual theater. At first.

Publication schedules being what they are, I suppose I'm writing this for those of you who decided to wait for the inevitable video release. And you know the score, right? What we have here lies somewhere on the continuum between *Independence Day* and *Judge Dredd*, a steaming example of the nineties' sole innovation in the Arts, the Generic Hundred Million Dollar Movie (GHMDM). As such, you know what to expect: a dickless monstrosity that throws money and explosions in every direction at a million mph and a hundred-thirty decibels, with plot holes you could park the Enterprise in and characters as deep as Malaysian electroplate, and the whole thing obviously cost enough to turn Liberia into Luxembourg, and after awhile it sinks in that it doesn't add up to much. But it will in fact fill a couple of hours of your time, just as spackling paste will fill a crack in your sheetrock.

And if that's what you expected, friends, you will not be disappointed.

Well, so what was/expecting, *Cries and Whispers*? Maybe a trace of my dudgeon is related to a faint, antiquarian fondness for the original TV show. That too was drivel, of course, but there was something perversely honest and whole-hearted about Irwin Allen's crapola. He may have been a larcenous Sammy Glick with the business ethics of a Renaissance pope and a four-year-old's taste in entertainment, but at least he brought a certain crude verve to his efforts. He genuinely seemed to love his rubber monsters. The film version of *Lost in Space*, by contrast, entirely lacks the courage of its own stupidity.

The plot: the intrepid Robinson family is mankind's last hope, launched into space to seek suitable worlds to colonize, as the Earth's biosphere is on the edge of collapse and will no longer support human life within twenty years. (Kind of a grim background for

frothy action-adventure, isn't it?) Dr. Smith, a space-program physician in the pay of a worldwide conspiracy of malcontents, sabotages their ship, but is trapped on board at liftoff. As a result, the space family Robinson and their unwilling guest are thrown hopelessly off course and encounter a series of adventures amazingly reminiscent of those featured in other movies. GHMDMs generally are assembled out of pieces of other movies, and cataloging these tropes as they come provides a degree of amusement in itself: The megacity from *Bladerunner*! The precocious computer-genius brat from *T2*! The obligatory *Alien* riffs! Oooh, look, the melting door from *Forbidden Planet*! At movie's end, by the way, Earth apparently is still doomed, and an Alienesque hellbeast that has burrowed into one of the players is still present. Meaning, I suppose, that everyone dies soon after the credits.

Which works for me.

One can no more apply "critical" standards to this than to a fireworks display, so we may as well pull out a few points worthy of note:

The Coolest Thing: take a wild guess. *Of course* the special effects are nice. Direct-to-video chancery sores starring Walter Koenig have nice special effects these days. I did enjoy seeing the movie faithfully recreate the TV series' colorfully absurd launch to orbit (large, round, blunt objects like the Jupiter 2 not really being aerodynamically suited for this kind of action).

The Funniest Thing: *Everything* involving William Hurt, a once-interesting actor now settling into a pompous rigidity that would do Charlton Heston proud. His promotional interviews for the film, in which he rumbled on about the importance of Family, gave the impression that maybe he thought he was in *Cries and Whispers*, and he creeps through the movie with a pained yet resigned expression suggestive of constipation.

The Worst Thing: the dialogue is really, really dire, and not in a memorable, Ed Wood sort of way, either. The actors' lines clatter to the pavement like so many fishing weights. It's bad enough to make you root for the players in the rare moments when the proceedings struggle to a dim sort of life.

Unsurprisingly, most of these moments are propelled by Gary Oldman, who has developed quite a lucrative sideline in villainy now that ambisexual British psychopaths are Hollywood's Bad Guys du jour. As for the rest, the Dumb Guy from "Friends" acquires himself capably as pilot Don West, displaying an emotional palette that ranges effortlessly from Brave to Horny. It's always nice to see Mimi Rogers work, and I assume the check cleared. And Lacey Chabert, the "roller girl" from *Boogie Nights*, steals what there is of the show to take. In the film, the Robinson's fourteenish daughter Penny is unsurprisingly morphed into an attitudinous punkette, and after a few minutes I realized that I was desperately attracted to her, just as I was to the original some thirty years ago. Back then, however, this was "cute," whereas now it's called a "felony". God, I hate getting old.

Whew! There it is, a "review" of something that can barely be said to exist at all. Other than Penny and her little body, the entire flick fell out of my head on a fifteen-minute drive home. This is cinematic Zima, with no aftertaste. It's aggressively forgettable. Rent it or don't.

-Bruce Lanier Wright



mushroom.man

Paolo Tullio

The Lilliput Press

ISBN 1-901866-09-2

<http://indigo.ie/~lilliput>

Before procuring a copy of *mushroom.man* by Paolo Tullio, author of *North of Naples, South of Rome*, I was apprehensive —even cynical— about reading an Irish novel with a subplot which utilizes an exchange of email message exchanges between the two first-person narrators. Indeed, I had an olfaction of bandwagon-hopping in pursuit of bestseller heaven.

I was however, wrong. *mushroom.man* diluted my doubts, and for me, shook dust from old oxidized trains of thought with a clarity I've rarely encountered outside the works of Robert Anton Wilson [1] or Paul Devereux [2]. The novel concerns itself with two main characters, a young British psychologist sojourning in the University of Iowa, who stumbles across the Internet postings of the mysterious *mushroom.man*, an ex-artificial intelligence programmer who has dropped-out to live a life of recreational, academic, spiritual and culinary mycology [3], somewhere in the depths of the Irish countryside.

The psychologist, frustrated by the loneliness of his academic exile, seeks escapism and attempts to find just what makes his mystery mycologist tick.

He begins with direct interrogation to no avail, instead receiving brush-offs, in the shape of oblique meandering messages — possible cryptic analogies in answer to questions, or just whatever *mushroom.man* feels like talking about.

The *mushroom.man* states his abhorrence of proselytism, subtly forcing the 'student' to ask indirect questions in order to receive more direct — if slightly irrelevant answers. As the email relationship develops, we learn more about the ascetic earthy life of the *mushroom.man*, his demons, his ghosts, his tormentors,

neighbors (local cocaine dealers and immortalist cults) and past loves, as well as his various insights into life, death and the world of hallucinogens. The mood for each chapter is set by accompanying fungi illustrations and short descriptions, their characters so befitting as to prove that Tullio — himself a Co. Wicklow restaurateur — knows his 'shrooms.

Inspired, the psychologist integrates the ravings of the *mushroom.man* into an academic paper entitled 'Chronic Abuse of Psychedelics', trying in vain to steer the course of the results to achieve the result he desires — to prove that the *mushroom man* has displayed schizophrenic behavior which can be blamed on the intake of mushrooms. Hardly excusable scientific methodology...

Tullio's talent really shines through to a deeper level, when it becomes more apparent to the reader that they can identify themselves with *both* characters — one a well-behaved conservative striving to escape a humdrum existence, and the other a semi-hermit, torn between asceticism and frail sociability, whilst coping with what might — or might not — be enlightenment.

Several currently hot memes make an appearance, Tullio explaining them in such a manner as to educate the uninformed reader without breaking pace. In particular, the *mushroom.man*'s opinion towards artificial intelligence; are we really in a position to create 'artificial intelligence', while unable to define just what intelligence is? The *mushroom.man* also raves about of fractals, analogizing them in the context of trying to measure a ragged shoreline — how small is an inlet?

Paolo Tullio's *mushroom.man* is a warm, *useful* and quite remarkable publication, which I would have no hesitation in recommending. Apart from all else, it's the first fictional work I've come across in *any* media that has convincingly dealt with the day-to-day Internet experience.

[1] <http://www.rawilson.com>

[2] http://www.inept.com/reviews/reader/long_trip.htm

[3] The study of fungi

—Daev

WWW.FRNGEWARE.COM

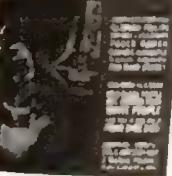
MIGHT MAGAZINE

Shiny Adidas Track Suits and the Death of Camp and Other Essays

From *Might Magazine*

Berkley Boulevard Books

ISBN 0-425-16477-2 US\$ 14.00



Everyday, it seems, there's another book published out of the grave of a once great magazine. The progression seems natural. But it is disconcerting that books are becoming more like magazines and that magazines are going simply out of print. The ability of the book to present an extended argument over a series of well considered chapters is being replaced by the quick-read, disposable magazine mentality. There are of course exceptions. This

collection of essays showcases the wide variety of talent that was published upon the slick pages of *Might* during its four year existence. Here is David Foster Wallace on the ironic mythic implications of AIDS, R. U. Sirius on indentured servitude, Jess Mowry on gangs and a slew of notable others pontificating upon subjects ranging from Caesar Salad to Virtual Enlightenment. All of the pieces are well written and engaging, exemplifying the best qualities of *Might*. But the entire endeavor leads me to wonder over the old irony that no one appreciates anything until it's gone. Long live *Might*, *Might* is dead! Now you can read the book. Watch for the movie, TV show and Saturday morning cartoon show.

-Bonesy

FRINGEWARE REVIEW

Fuckemos



Fuckemos
Celebration
Man's Ruin Records

Forget Ween. While they've recently made some good pop songs, Ween seem to have grown out of the intensity and audacity that made Pod such a classic album. Maybe Gene and Dean have been through rehab, but I got a hankerin for a dirty assed rock roll injection. That's why Austin's Fuckemos are such a great band; these sick bastards ain't got nothing to lose but their buzz.

Ok, maybe I'm overreacting, but Fuckemos have so much sarcastic charm that even the Moist Boyz look serious in comparison. Fuckemos' newest full length, *Celebration*, is chock full of the same dangerous rock and roll absurdity that have made their past albums so damn fun. The heart and soul of Fuckemos' allure lies in singer Russell Porter's sincere delivery of only the crudest of lyrics. His voice, sounding as though it comes from a drunken demon with extremely large testicles, is usually pitch-shifted way down. On sensitive numbers like "Leslie Ann", the demon voice really captures the humor of Fuckemos. With full heavy metal accompaniment, Porter kicks up the romance, declaring "I'm gonna come out of the closet soon to start a lesbian band with you." Leslie Ann must be very turned on. The ultra catchy title track, "Celebration", is fucking hilarious, with Porter declaring "I've got a feeling that I'm not gay" (One can only marvel at his insight). On "Bladder Control" Russell ditches the heavy vocal effects and screams like Rob Halford about needing a "necktie in my pants" to tie off a cock exploding with urine. This is some funny shit, and it is Porter's take on serious issues like drug addiction (listen to "Vague & Mysterious" with the lines "Again and again/I spent my money on illegal medication"), sexuality, relationships and bodily functions that really give Fuckemos their character. Buy this album.

—Ricky Wrecked



The Planet of the Future Dead
By Austin Osman Emme
230 pp US\$8.98

Perhaps the most captivating book ever written. Even more so because there was a character so much like myself involved in the increasingly complex storyline. I found that I couldn't put this book down. It was as if I were staring into a mirror. Rather, as if I were staring out of a mirror into a world with a far richer dimensionality than mine. And I can say without hesitation that everyone in the world should, no must, read this book- foremost because it contains the meaning of everyone in the world.

—Bonesy



Ui
Lifelike
Southern Records

Ui's sound is hard to explain. They've got a funky feel that leans towards jazz. At the same time their songs are textured with organic samples

There are no vocals, with Ui relying instead on the construction and deconstruction of groove and melody to carry their songs. Ui consists of 2 multi-instrumentalists (who both focus on bass) and a drummer. Music critics call them "post rock", but I really don't want to get into that kind of analysis. Ui has also recently collaborated with Stereolab on a project called Uilab, and share some of Stereolab's basic sonic ideals. At times, Ui even sound like Medeski, Martin & Wood on *Valium*. I'd say that Ui are pretty unique.

Ui's second full-length release, *Lifelike*, was recorded and digitally manipulated over the last few years. The result is a cohesive album that retains the warmth of live instrumentation, while embracing the wonders of modern digital technology. The guys in Ui are technically gifted musicians, but you won't find any instrumental jerk off sessions here. Ui would rather dabble in arrangement than show off their coordination. Songs like "Drive Until He Sleeps" and "Laceria" are built, taken apart, and then put back together again, all with a sleepy ease. Subtle samples and catchy guitar riffs decorate the sonic landscape, but underneath all the texture is a fundamental emphasis on groove. Seemingly looped live drums and tight bass lines keep Ui's songs together. These guys do not ever let go of the pulse. Although *Lifelike* is often engaging, the work lacks any real emotional drive. Ui produce more than boring background music, but ultimately they do little to demand the listener's attention.

—Ricky Wrecked



Sean Lennon
Into The Sun
Grand Royal

Wow. I'm surprised how much I like this album. I figured it would be another "offspring of a rock legend" piece of crap like The Wallflowers or Wilson Phillips. It turns out that Sean Lennon's *Into The Sun* is a very fine piece of pop work indeed. It's a rather eclectic blend of sounds, ranging from heavy meatalesque guitars to Brazilian jazziness, sometimes within one song. The vocal melodies and harmonies (provided by members of Cibo Mato) are especially lovely. I hear much more of a Beach Boys influence than the Beatles, especially in the quirky, Brian Wilson-like arrangements. Interspersed with hooky pop tunes like "One Night", "Two Fine Lovers" and "Queue" are numbers like the groovy instrumental "Photosynthesis" and the intricately arranged "Sean's Theme". *Into the Sun* is chock full of aural whackiness. While it's pretty all over the place stylistically, it seems to be unified by the fact that everything on it is a lot of fun. This is a very cool pop album. Leave your pre-conceptions at the door and check it out.

—Craig



Radio Ranch
1610 West 35th
Austin, TX 78703
1(800)357-9257
www.radioranch.com

In general, museums frustrate me. As an adolescent, I used to spend untold hours in San Francisco's museum of natural history, tensely contemplating the glass that separated me from various relics and objects of fascination, wanting desperately to touch and caress the artifacts. (Tactile sensation often brings about a sense of existential reassurance for me.)

Sometime about four years ago, one of my neighbors brought home a human skeleton. It was in a box—a nice box, brown, with esoteric medical scrawlings on it, and a worthy weight to it, full of promise. He pulled out the bones, one by one, and I found myself utterly fascinated, lost in the shapes and widths, the rough surfaces and karmic implications. My neighbor hung the skeleton from his ceiling, an act which I considered, at best, hubris in that it was apparently motivated more in a sense of fashion accessorization than anything else. "Where the hell did you get that?" I asked him.

Which is how I found out about Radio Ranch.

Nestled in a cranny just off west 38th in north-central Austin, Radio Ranch combines the best qualities of museum and ye olde curiosity shoppe for the po-mo tech punk. Sculptures by Steve Brudniak vie for space with spent mortar rounds, vacuum tubes (in assorted sizes, both burned and viable), bones (human, monkey, and other),



Iron Feather's Choonz and Warez
Various Artists

Stevyn e Protheroe
P O Box 1905
Boulder, CO 80306
sprother@phidias.colorado.edu
US\$ 18.00

This excellent compilation has been spawned into existence by the parties responsible for one of the greatest pieces of printed matter in the free world, The Iron Feather Journal. 36 tracks on 2 golden discs are filled and quivering to the uppermost edge with hardcore tunz, beats, samples and loops. The first disc kicks off with a poignant Sinatra sample and reaches an intense crescendo with Scat's "Duedenum". Also featured are DJ Hendy, PH10, Agent Babylon, 69Valentine, Turbo Ted, Deadly Buda and more. The first track on the second disc is a bonus CD-ROM filled with 220 megs of valuable information—most of the sacred books of the world, art, porn, first-aid, investigative techniques, interviews, graphix, fonts, serial numbers and loads of information you should never show to anyone wearing a badge. The rest of disc two is filled with a hodge podge of sound bites and loops—Redbox Quarter Tones, Jim Morrison and the Christal Methodists all make an appearance. If you have a computer with a CD-ROM drive in your survivalist bunker, Iron Feather's Choonz and Warez should definitely be in there with you other essentials. And even if you've just got the good ole CD player, you still have one of the best collections of music available.

—Bonesy

various communications devices, antique surgical implements, enormous styrofoam vegetables, photographic equipment, stainless steel glass-fronted medical cabinets, dynamo motors, and ruthlessly complex-looking items of such obscure technical origin that their very aura would cause Jules Verne and William Gibson both paroxysms of manuscripting. Radio Ranch is an electric witch's cave, a circus funhouse of premillennial techno-glee, the first resource that I've ever discovered to so completely relieve the frustration often provoked in me by museums, by letting me fondle, and even take home, the mysterious objects.

The store's managers are Neil and Belinda, two of the nicest folks of whom you'll ever have the pleasure of making an acquaintance. Both combine a sort of bewildered charm with an obsessively extensive memory and a somewhat manic love/hate relationship with their merchandise, often appearing out of the morass of machined relics inhabiting the store like a couple of gnomic alchemists with pockets full of dusty circuitry and esoteric parts.

Jeff Gorvetzian once found one of the original pieces of equipment used as a base for the Star Wars lightsabers at Radio Ranch (that was the same day I shocked myself trying to charge the field phone handset). Not long after, Neil and Belinda gave us the antique dental drill-stand (replete with sink, tray, and, yes, a drill) that now looms ominously against the south wall of the FringeWare store. My mother gives me Radio Ranch gift certificates on birthdays. And if those aren't high recommendations, then I don't know what are.

—Justin



Bitch: In Praise of Difficult Women
By Elizabeth Wurtzel
Doubleday & Co., Inc.
ISBN 0-385-48400-3 \$US23.95

How much of a book do you need to read in order to realize it's nothing but a huge piece of drivel crap? A chapter? Two? Maybe just the jacket sleeve and a couple of review quotes? For Elizabeth Wurtzel's *Bitch* it took me about 50 pages before I knew I was wasting precious time reading the shoddiest 'tribute' to difficult women ever published.

First of all, the content has nothing to do with either the title or the description on the dust jacket. Secondly, it is so poorly written (run-on sentences, a blatantly mis-titled story by Joyce Carol Oates, seemingly unending lists of forgettable pop culture icons—Ally Sheedy?!?) that I shudder to think what the hell her editor was thinking. Lastly, being a bitch and celebrated difficult woman myself, I had every intention of enjoying and reveling in Wurtzel's book. I even thought of buying a copy for my own personal library. Well. The only thing the book did do for me was to give me a reason to bitch about Wurtzel and her writing, which isn't all that difficult. Poor little Upper East Side princess has written yet another whiney ME book (see *Prozac Nation*) that should, in the words of the great Dorothy Parker, not be tossed aside lightly but thrown with great force.

And how dare she call herself a bitch. Really.

—Sedgewick



Crimes of Culture: Three Decades of Citizen's Arrests

By Richard Kostelanetz

Autonomedia

ISBN 1-57027-023-6 (256 pp)

US\$ 8.00

A decidedly safe assumption with regards to culture - and our

metaglobalized American pseudoculture in particular - is that, just as Aristotle ascertained, power is ultimately concentrated. In *Crimes of Culture*, Richard Kostelanetz explores, through a vastitude of consistently insightful and humorous critical essays, the darkest and assuredly most frightening crevices of institutionalization, the literary establishment, editorial prejudices, the NEA, mainstream news media and corporate infrastructure/workforce subsidization, and "hive-mind" aesthetics in general, peeling back the viscous semantic and syntactical layers, all the while exposing the cancerous putrefaction of artistic tyranny for what it is: absurdly unapologetic favoritism in place of objective professionalism or responsibility to and respect for the freedom of personal expression, both of which are mistakenly assumed by many to be both obligatory and administrated impartially in the literary and journalistic fields. Editors too frequently endeavor, Kostelanetz maintains, to halt the dissemination of what might be considered imposing, unconventional or otherwise controversial viewpoints, and to compromise the artistic integrity of writers by compartmentalizing key issues and devaluating them by means of elitist selectivity or rewriting to the specifications or expectancies of the publisher. *Crimes of Culture* allows its author to exploit and undermine freely (without risking severe exploitation himself) the prevalent societal degradation of would-be instinctive creativity, affecting individual and ecumenical perception. From the observably extrasolicitous propensities of the journalistic world to his own dissatisfaction as an indisputably overqualified and inexplicably underappreciated writer of more than two and a half decades, Kostelanetz accentuates the necessity of critical and poetic autonomy exuberantly, in addition to preconditioning against the perils of over-analysis and misinterpretation. A tauntingly equitable masterpiece of *furor poeticus*, with impenetrable logic its primary hue, *Crimes of Culture* places author/prestidigitator Kostelanetz securely within the ranks of the most strategic and meritorious thinkers of his or any generation.

—Clayton

Book Review Haiku for Almost Every NYT Bestseller:
Book in hand, open window
Old Mountain pond
Splash!



Fugazi

End Hits

Dischord

Unlike Green Day, Fugazi doesn't worry about being on MTV, having the neat new hair style, or making shit loads of money. They worry instead about making music on their

own terms. Because of their work ethic (constant touring and recording) and freedom from corporate influence (they're still distributed by Dischord and never charge more than \$5 a show), Fugazi has gracefully aged into a pillar of DIY punk success without any major radio or television exposure. What you get, for better or worse, is pure Fugazi. End Hits, Fugazi's sixth album, proves that not only have they survived on the outskirts of the music industry, but that their music is still alive with the same honesty and energy that their fans have grown to love.

Pushing their sound a little further, Fugazi find themselves balancing angular, harsh guitars with delicate, intertwining melodies. Bassist Joe Lally and drummer Brendan Canty provide a rock solid backbone, showing once again that these two are perhaps the best rhythm section in modern rock. End Hits frequently boils over with the populist lyrics we have come to expect from this harDCore outfit. From the critical aggression of "Five Corporations" ("every town will/be the same/this one's ours/let's take another/five corporations") and "Foreman's Dog" to the gentle whispers of "Pink Frosty", Fugazi deliver complex arrangements and excellent vocal performances. Never has Fugazi's sound been so diverse and dynamic and, luckily, they can handle the transition from serenity to anger with ease, even if it is a bit nauseating at times. End Hits solidifies Fugazi's position at the top of the anti-corporate heap, and never have they been more potent or venomous.

—Ricky Wrecked



The Push Kings

Far Places

Sealed Fate Records

Far Places, the latest release from Boston's Push Kings is a sugary sweet pop treat. Where their previous, self-titled, album seemed to draw its inspiration from the Mod Sixties, Far Places is reminiscent of Seventies soul and pop by the likes of The Jackson 5 and post-Beatles Paul McCartney. The band is led by brothers Carrick and Finn Moore Gerety, and man!, these guys know how to write a hook! "The Wild Ones" has a chorus that will be stuck in my head for a good while. The production and arrangements on the album are good overall. I especially dig the very sexy "The Girl Who Only Loves Candy". I do, however, find the record scratching that surfaces every so often a bit peculiar. It seems like there should either be a lot more of it or none at all. Still, it's great to hear some good old fashioned fun pop music. These guys also put on a swell live show. Don't miss them if they come through your town. While you're waiting, pick up Far Places, delicious pop music, fun for the whole family.

—Craig



teeth

By Hugh Gallagher
Pocket Books
ISBN 0-671-55166-3 \$US22.00

There are entirely too many books out there about "Generation X" that tend to be two steps behind mediocre. Hugh Gallagher's *teeth* is not one of them. Yes, it does deal with the generation penned "X" but is not the usual trendy, go-nowhere-fast type of novel. It is a tale of man's search for meaning in a 90s kind of world that doesn't subscribe to the jaded nonchalance so commonly stereotyped to the twentysomething-or-others.

Neil is a young writer living in New York City with nothing but problems and decisions to make. Injured at a party in high school, Neil is left with a mouthful of broken teeth and future dental bills to deal with. His friend, the dentist, has a dream plan called the Great Work lined up for Neil, but the boy can't quite commit. Reluctant to spend money he doesn't have on teeth he should have and coming to terms with the folding of his 'zine *Dusted*, Neil needs to make a decision: what to do and where to do it?

Determined to finish his manifesto, *Neil Before God*, the writer goes to L.A. With plans to hang with old friends from *Dusted* days, Neil realizes he is a stranger in a strange land. His friends are not who he thought they were — one got married, one writes for the rival 'zine *Buddha Smoke*, and another has sold out to the glitzy world of Hollywood. There Gallagher introduces us to a series of characters reminiscent of actual 90s icons: River Phoenix and the Viper Room, Lollapalooza and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Drew Barrymore and E.T.

He had to get out. Armed with an empty notebook to fill with his manifesto and the memory of a recent root canal, Neil sets out for Java. He travels throughout Indonesia searching for some kind of truth and ends up abandoning *Neil Before God*. Next is London where he attempts to meet up with last summer's dreamy Italian girlfriend only to find she's disappeared. Then comes an enlightening, hallucinogenic meeting with his broken teeth in the gritty part of London dubbed Hackney. Realizing that it's more than his teeth that need to be mended, Neil makes an appointment with his dentist to proceed with the Great Work and heads back to New York where the novel ends with a happier, wiser Neil who is about to receive a million dollar smile.

—Sedgewick



**The Edge Of The Bed:
How Dirty Pictures Changed My Life**
by Lisa Palac
Little Brown, 1998
ISBN 0-316-68849-5, \$22.95

Meet our protagonist, Lisa Palac — founding editor of Future Sex magazine, formerly a senior editor of *On Our Backs* magazine, producer of the unparalleled *Cyborgasm* audio VR series, and sexy dork.

Lisa the writer crafted this book as an autobiography, although judging from the publisher's cover jacket illo and descriptions, one might tend to mistake it for a sex-positive feminist revision of *My Secret Life*. Maybe it is...

Lisa the person is exceptionally bright, she nurtures an exquisitely self-deprecating sense of humor, and comes across as quite attractive. On the other hand, she's an "I-never-get-laid" dork, who bought the American Dream of Mr. Right and a white picket fence wholesale, and rambles on at length about her longings and inadequacies. Yet, in the midst of all that confusion, Lisa never quite abandons her principles and sincerity in the quest to understand that topic which intrigues her most: really good sex. As a result, she comes to the forefront of sex-savvy media personalities, hanging with the likes of demigods Susie Bright, Annie Sprinkle and Fakir, but still faces troubles getting laid.

Lisa the editor has paid her dues, fighting tooth and nail with established pornographers, Religious Right zealots, mainstream media, hipster fortysomething men in suits, and vehement feminists alike, to attempt to represent and publish good erotica — which is rare. Her work explores the liberating effects of pornography, eroticism of religion, and the unprecedented sexual honesty created in the age of the Internet — just what is or isn't alleged "cybersex" good for?

The erotic tension of this book derives from the sincerity and barenness of Lisa's personal experiences, described with a welcome mix of poignancy and humor: "Pundits and policy makers are always so outraged over images of sex ... why don't these moral crusaders devote a little time to stomping out the heavily commercialized, counterfeit ideals of love and romance?"

On the pro side, *The Edge of the Bed* reads like a secret diary from an Adrienne Shelly character. Mmm, yummy... On the con side, the book comes across as a bit too Wired, but frequent interjections from Susie Bright make up for that pop-culture transgression.

In examining Lisa Palac's personal trajectory from midwestern Catholic schoolgirl in a conservative Polish-American family, to renowned sex-positive feminist cyberwho of the 1990's, I am reminded of a cute, brainy, dorky 27-year-old Polish woman who overcame her own Catholic upbringing to take away my innocence, one neurosis at a time. It's the stuff of which good, real-life sex experiences are made.

—PWN

www.fringeware.com



Persimmon Wind: A Martial Artist's Journey In Japan
Dave Lowry
1998, Tuttle Books
ISBN 0-8048-3142-4 \$19.95

Among the practitioners of every art form are always to be found a few individuals who exemplify the ideals of the medium; who approach their practice with a sincerity and integrity not often observed in the masses, and whose efforts speak for themselves. Dave Lowry has long since shown himself, in both words and practice, to be an artist, student, and teacher of such a caliber as to help set the standards for the rest of us in the fields of classical martial arts.

Lowry's newest book, **Persimmon Wind**, is a continuation of the journey that he began in **Autumn Lightning: The Education of an American Samurai**, which chronicles his early lessons in *kenjutsu* and *bushido* under a Japanese master living in America. After several years of study, Lowry's *sensei* returned to Japan, while Lowry elected to stay in the U.S. and continue his training as best he could with other teachers. **Persimmon Wind** gives an account of Lowry's experiences, many years later, in travelling to Japan to be reunited with his teacher.

Perhaps Lowry's greatest strength in writing lies in his ability to convey the traditions of Japanese martial arts, by viewing the present through both his own

eyes, and through anecdotal histories of the arts: his accounts of his own particular lessons, destinations, and experiences are often intertwined with stories from Japan's warrior traditions that illuminate and contextualize the lifestyle he has chosen for himself, histories that lend a heart and solidity to the underlying motivations of the serious martial arts practitioner. Lowry's narratives are further given an impact and forthrightness in the quiet humility that he brings to his work on the page and in the dojo.

Throughout his stay in Japan, Lowry's time was divided between training with his master, and spending time with his master's family, and visiting the ancestral homes of the *Shin Kage Ryu* school of swordsmanship in which Lowry trains (a school descended from such notables as Yagyu Munenori, among others). The observations that Lowry makes in his travels through rural Japanese villages, and in his interactions with the populace (having been in the somewhat unique position of being not only a *gaijin*, but also the *gaijin* student of a prominent and well-respected *kenjutsu* master), are simultaneously provocative and illustrative, coming as they do from a man who is obviously not only very strong in his personal beliefs, but also very aware of his clumsiness in a foreign culture, and his delicate status as an alien. **Persimmon Wind** has served to increase the respect that I hold for Dave Lowry many-fold, for the choices that he has made and his devotion in upholding them, and for his generosity in so openly sharing his experiences with the rest of us. One cannot help but sincerely hope that this book, and others like it, become standard references for anyone attempting to achieve an integrity in their life and work.

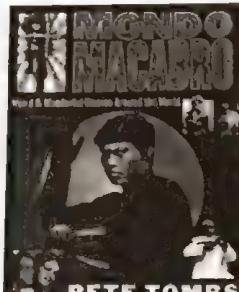
-Justin



**Scream When You Burn:
A Pound of Seared Flesh from
the Lap of Coffee Culture**
edited by Rob Cohen
Incommunicado Press
ISBN 1-888277-00-9 US\$14.00

Cohen, who in his spare time edits *Caffeine Magazine*, has assembled an excellent anthology of intense and strange, brave and new poetry and prose. You won't find any of the usual overly tender, naive and sentimental, "this one is about my cat/dog or the guy/girl I once loved/hated at summer camp/college" type writing that plagues the majority of anthologies. The "seared pound" of subject matter here ranges from Dave Alvin's stark male wanderings and wonderings in "Boys Without Dates" and Charles Bukowski's singular hell in "The Vain Dark" to Ellyn Maybe's political howlings in "Not Yet" and Larry Tomoyasu's memories of a Grandfather that killed the Black Dahlia in "Folk Art". The language here speaks of having been forged and reforged in the hard hard burning of lives lived deep in the fires of the everyday. Over 70 writers, well-known and not, mostly from the western edge, work through the ink of this book, creating a unique and vital measure of these Late Days. If you care at all for that mysterious endeavor called poetry, consider this book required reading.

-Bonesy



Mondo Macabro: Weird & Wonderful Cinema Around the World
by Pete Tombs
St. Martin's Griffin
ISBN 0312187483 US\$18.95

This is the latest from one of the co-authors of the exceptional *Immortal Tales* which examined the weird and wonderful cinema of Europe. This time out Tombs provides a much needed guide to International Cinema, exploring the rich and fertile cinematic traditions of Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Japan. Hundreds of movie stills, photos and posters grace the well researched pages. It is refreshing to read that the influence of Hollywood, while apparent in such gems as a Turkish Star Trek and Filipino Vampires, is vibrantly challenged by the each of the country's native cinema. Hong Kong obviously has their Kung Fu films. But lesser known examples are the snake films of India, Turkish costume adventures, Brazilian devil films and Mexican wrestler films. It's amazing to realize how productive the film industries of other countries are. And it is refreshing to see how free the rest of the world is (so far) from the product placement, audience demographic and superficial storylines that characterize so much of the Hollywood dreck.

-Bonesy



Perfume Tree

feeler

World Domination Recordings

Imagine yourself on 6th Street in Austin, about to enter a frat-daddy pickup joint called Bob Popular. Normally, you would run from such a place, but it's *South by Southwest* Music Conference time, and you've heard rumors that good electronica is about to hit the stage. So you walk bravely past the doorman flashing your scammed press badge, and grab a spot near the front of the stage. That was in 1997, and what I witnessed that night was an absolutely killer set performed by the Vancouver-based band **Perfume Tree**. I was transformed instantly into a fan. And now, I have their new album. Called **feeler**, this latest installment by Perfume Tree is filled with what is best described as absolutely beautiful music. Dreamy girl vocals and synthetic pulsing analog keyboards are the drug. Drum machines and breaks are the binding agent. An occasional reversed guitar serves as silk-screened blotter paper. Super-smooth transitions with long fades mix rich textures to create a subtle atmosphere that takes you on a heck of a ride. Track one "Can't You" is probably the closest thing to a single on the album, with its analog bass intro and trip hop-esque break beats. "Both Oceans" has a wonderful balance of Electro style drum programming, swimmy vocals, and pulsating 303's. The third song "Flooded" is a 10+ minute track that is one giant Drum and Bass Crescendo that builds into... well, a flood. Every track on this disc has something worth describing, so you better just go get it for yourself. Even if you don't like electronic music, this is one to buy.

-DMZ



Lewis Parker

Masquerades & Silhouettes
Melankolic/Astralwerks

Lewis Parker is the latest British Hip Hop import brought to us by Massive Attack's label *Melankolic*. At least, that's what the sticker on the CD says. This album has a great production, and a very spatial chilled-but-serious sound. Tons of orchestra samples are used in conjunction with solid beats that sound like original breaks, not the some hundred or so recycled loops we all know and love. DJ Bias lays down some good solid scratching to top it all off. The sub title of the album is *The Ancients Series One*, and that really sets the tone for the album both lyrically and musically. Sprinkled throughout the CD are lots of dramatic movie (or TV, or deep dead vinyl) samples ala late 80's industrial, which is a vibe I love and rarely get enough of thanks to inflexible IP laws. *Masquerades & Silhouettes* is a prime example of new school Hip-Hop proving that The Brits defiantly have a handle on the vibe, and are making it their own, pushing it up to the next level.

-DMZ

Everyone say thanks to Herb at Alien Records for sending us some CDs to review. If you looking for hard to find DJ vinyl, chek his shop in Austin @ 503 B West 15th St, or call for mail order info: 512-477-3909.



Jah Shaka & Mad Professor

Jah Shaka Meets Mad Professor
at Ariwa Sounds
RAS Records, Inc.

Dub has changed your life, and most of you probably don't even know it. Born out of late 70's and early 80's Jamaica, and fathered by

production wizard Lee Perry, Dub is a heavily stylized daughter of Reggae. Characterized by pulsing sub bass lines and extensive use of delays and reverb, Dub occurs at the magical point where producer becomes musician. With a flagrant disregard for standard studio practices, Dub rewrote the book on production technique, and proceeded to break all of those rules too. The sounds of tape rewinding at the beginning of a cut, dropping in an orchestra off of a record, bouncing tracks until tape hiss becomes a musical element, cranking the bass until it distorts, it goes on... Dub shook loose pre-conceived ideas about music production and recording with the same impact as the Beatles 1966-67 "Sgt. Pepper's" era. If you like Rap, DJ culture, dance remixes, Industrial music, or even Punk (Lee Perry produced the Clash's first album), you owe Dub big time. If you like anything modern that calls itself Electronica, it just would not exist without Dub. **Jah Shaka Meets Mad Professor** at Ariwa Sounds was released in 1984, and is probably my favorite example of good solid Dub. One side was produced by Jah Shaka, the other by Mad Professor, and they played on both. Used copies of it are around, and you might check www.rasslinrecords.com from time to time. Basically, if you own one dub record, this should be it. This album is pure art that stands up well against any human creative endeavor, particularly in the 20th century.

-DMZ



Hi-Fi Killers

Break 12inch single
Loosegroove Records

This is music by dope smokers, for dope smokers. The subtle bong hit sample at the beginning of the b-side track "Crazy Phux" was my first clue. Funky beats with strings and other Trip Hop atmospheric generators. The a-side "Break" has a great fuzz bass hook that just rocks, and some nice backbeat guitar riffs to keep the song rolling along. I've had good luck throwing this one into my Trip Hop set. This Record is Good solid music for imaginary Shaft sequels that never were, but should have been.

-DMZ



Yellow Note

We're Not the Beatles
Liquid Sky Music

Yellow Note is a new release that points toward the next phase of Drum and Bass. It still has a lot of the classic D&B elements such as time stretched vocals and up tempo beats clocking in at around 160bpm. But it also incorporates several singers and rappers, which is good to hear. The track "Sometimes Friend" has some dandy jazzy girl vocals mixed into it, and "Whatever" will probably get some dance floor play. If you like Drum and Bass and **Tricky**, you'll probably like this record.

-DMZ

FRINGEWARE Bestseller List

Commodify Your Dissent:

Salvos From The Baffler

Thomas Frank, Matt Weiland (eds),

Norton, \$15.00, 326g

Worldwide Living Death Frankenstein

Slavery: The Desperate Messages of

Francis E Dec, Esq

Francis Dec, El Hermano "R", \$10.00, 257g

Pimp: The Story of My Life

Iceberg Slim, Holloway House, \$6.99, 291g

Mutilating The Body:

Identity In Blood And Ink

Kim Hewitt,

Bowling Green University Press, \$18.95, 395g

Here Is Melba!

Brother Russell, nipponfactory, \$10.00, 257g

Best of Temp Slave

Jeff Kelly, Garrett County Press, \$10.00, 286g

Amok Journal: (senssurround edition) a Compendium of Psycho-Physiological Investigations

Stuart Swezey (ed), Amok, \$19.95, 329g

Undoing Yourself With Energized

Meditation & Other Devices (6th rev ed)

Christopher Hyatt,

New Falcon Publications, \$14.95, 316g

Book of the SubGenius

Ivan Stang, Simon & Schuster, \$14.95, 335g

Lustmord:

The Writings and Artifacts of Murderers

Brian King (ed), Bloat Books, \$14.95, 310g

Captain Is Out to Lunch &

The Sailors Have Taken Over the Ship

Charles Bukowski,

Black Sparrow Press, \$14.00, 305g

Return of Count Electric

William Browning Spencer,

White Wolf Publishing, \$5.99, 289g

Millennium

Hakim Bey, Autonomedia, \$7.00, 276g

Attack Of The Chao Prod

Madame Chao,

NYC Public Access Terevision, \$10.00, 335g

Book of Surrealist Games

Alastair Brotchie, Mel Gooding (eds),

Shambhala, \$11.00, 279g

Dreamtigers

Jorge Luis Borges,

University of Texas Press, \$9.95, 276g

Take the Rich Off Welfare

Mark Zepezauer, Arthur Naiman,

Odonian Press, \$9.00, 243g

We The Media: A Citizen's Guide to

Fighting for Media Democracy

Don Hazen, New Press, \$15.95, 303g

Censored 1998: The News That Didn't Make The

News—The Year's Top 25 Censored News Stories

Peter Phillips, Project Censored,

Seven Stories Press, \$16.95, 377g

Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements

of Propaganda: Open Media Pamphlet Series

Noam Chomsky, Seven Stories Press, \$4.95, 233g

Motorcycle Diaries

Ernesto Che Guevara, Ann Wright (trans),

Verso, \$11.00, 274g

Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy and Other Stories

Tim Burton, Rob Weisbach Books, \$20.00, 344g

Edge Of The Bed:

How Dirty Pictures Changed My Life

Lisa Palac, Little, Brown & Co., \$22.95, 427g

Death Scenes: A Homicide Detective's Scrapbook

Sean Tejaratchi (ed), Feral House, \$19.95, 388g

Fielding's World's Most Dangerous Places 1998

Robert Y Pelton, Fielding's, \$21.95, 493g

Brother Russell: Melba Comes Alive CD

Brother Russell,

Vinyl Communications, \$12.00, 257g

**Figure
your
shipping
rate**

11 Add lines in column 5(7) from the front side of this form. This is the total weight of your order.¹¹

12 Find the row in the first column which is less than or equal to the total weight of your order from line 11, then read across that row to find your shipping destination column and use the US\$ figure listed to find your **adjusted shipping rate** in line 13. *Example:* Mr. and Mrs. Palk are placing an order from Seoul, with a total weight of 901 g. So \$16.96 would be their shipping.

| (1) If line 11 is— | (2) And your shipping destination is in— | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| | USA | NAFTA | Western Hemisphere | Europe | Earth |
| (3) Your shipping rate is— | | | | | |
| 28 | \$0.32 | \$0.40 | \$0.70 | \$0.90 | \$1.00 |
| 57 | \$0.55 | \$0.63 | \$1.07 | \$1.35 | \$1.61 |
| 85 | \$0.78 | \$0.85 | \$1.44 | \$1.85 | \$2.27 |
| 114 | \$1.01 | \$1.07 | \$1.81 | \$2.35 | \$2.93 |
| 170 | \$1.47 | \$1.51 | \$2.18 | \$3.01 | \$3.85 |
| 227 | \$1.93 | \$1.95 | \$2.55 | \$3.84 | \$4.77 |
| 284 | \$2.39 | \$2.39 | \$2.92 | \$4.68 | \$5.95 |
| 341 | \$2.95 | \$2.83 | \$3.29 | \$5.52 | \$7.05 |
| 398 | \$2.95 | \$3.55 | \$3.66 | \$6.36 | \$8.15 |
| 455 | \$3.00 | \$3.55 | \$4.03 | \$7.20 | \$9.25 |
| 909 | \$3.00 | \$5.25 | \$6.99 | \$12.00 | \$16.95 |
| 1364 | \$4.00 | \$6.95 | \$9.79 | \$16.80 | \$23.65 |
| 1818 | \$5.00 | \$8.65 | \$12.59 | \$21.60 | \$30.85 |

Shipping rates apply only in the areas listed; call before placing interplanetary orders. Rates replace and supersede any previously FWI shipping rate list. Merchandise will be shipped according to *First Class/Priority* rates in US (depending on weight) and generally via *Small Packet Airmail* elsewhere. For orders which weigh more than rates listed in this table, contact FWI via telephone or check our online catalogue at <http://bot.fringeware.com/>

13 Enter the shipping rate from the table listed above in line 12(3). This is your **adjusted shipping rate**.¹³

14 If you would like to have a receipt taken upon delivery, for tracking your order to its destination, enter -2- if you live in the US and -5- if you live outside the US. Otherwise, enter -0-.¹⁴

15 Add lines 13 and 14. This is your **shipping**.¹⁵

**Credit card
orders cannot
be processed
without a
working phone
number**

Circle card type: VISA MasterCard Discover AMEX JCB

Print name as it
appears on card:

Card number:

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Expires:

Signature:

**Your
comments
are
appreciated**

(Do not write in this space, ever.)

**Our
address**

FRINGEWARE, INC.

2716 Guadalupe Street +1 512 494 9273 tel/fax
Austin Texas 78705 USA 11a-11p Central

orders@fringeware.com
<http://www.fringeware.com/shop/>

Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda



by Noam Chomsky
price: \$4.95
weight: 233g
code: BOOK-1-888363-49-5

A short yet vital essay in the Open Pamphlet series, Chomsky seizes the history of American propaganda like a starving pit bull. The result? No major media outlet remains unbiten, each equally guilty in propagating The Big Lie(s). (64 pp)

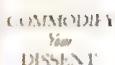
Jamming the Media: A Citizen's Guide: Reclaiming the Tools of Communication



by Gareth Branwyn
price: \$18.95
weight: 335g
code: BOOK-0-8118-1795-4

This is a comprehensive survey of do-it-yourself media. From writing and distributing a zine, producing a cable access TV show, posting messages on Usenet, releasing your own CD, making a web site, running a pirate radio station, making videos and film, media pranking and multimedia, you'll find it covered here, all without relying on a corporate budget. Fully referenced source material is given throughout, making this an indispensable modern reference to anyone who wants to fight back. (353 pp)

Commodify Your Dissent: Salvos From The Baffler



by Thomas Frank, Matt Weiland (eds)
price: \$15.00
weight: 326g
code: BOOK-0-393-31673-4

Subtitled "The Business of Culture in the New Gilded Age", this collection of the best from stellar Chicago-based magazine *The Baffler* is essential reading for the dissatisfied, disenfranchised and disillusioned. Part one, "The Rebel Consumer", features pieces on *Wired* as the voice of corporate revolution and the lamentable resurgence of the beatniks. Part two, "The Culture of Business" focuses on Sony, "Time Management Gospel" and the selling of leadership. Part three, "The Culturetrust Generation," examines the titular idea of the commodification of dissent as exemplified in the "Alternative", whether it be in books, music or film. The final section, "Wealth Against Commonwealth Revisited", takes apart the cyber-revolution, the cyber-elite and the notion of the Edge City. (287 pp)

Test Card F: Television, Mythinformation Social Control

TEST CARD F
by Anonymous



price: \$6.00
weight: 196 g
code: BOOK-1-873176-91-0

From the downright villainous anti-establishment pinko insurrectionists at AK Press, the devil take them and their evil souls, comes a collection of foul lies, twisted information, and malicious untruths designed to undermine your affection for that indispensable and unapproachably beneficial tool, the television. Who knows what dim cesspool these commies raided, or what slug-like, distinctly red-tinged soulless anti-capitalist they paid off to manufacture the words within this book, but it's all so completely outlandish that no true American will be hard-pressed to discount it altogether. (80 pp)

Corporate Media and the Threat To Democracy:

by Robert W McChesney



price: \$4.95
weight: 218g
code: BOOK-1-888363-47-9

This long essay goes a long way towards explaining the length and breadth of the media's manipulation by Corporate interests. Extensively footnoted and documented, McChesney is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Required reading. (80 pp)

We The Media: A Citizen's Guide to Fighting for Media Democracy



by Don Hazen

price: \$15.95
weight: 303g
code: BOOK-1-56584-380-0

Reams of information that the corporate linchpins of America would vastly prefer you to ignore. Subject matter ranges from TV and similar forms of hypnotism, to printed media (including books), advertising, disinformation and propaganda, media monopolies, and so on. Handy diagrams chart the synergistic ownerships of all the big dogs, and scary little post-it notes grace virtually every page with all the facts and fallacies that you need in order to recognize the undermining of the free press, and, consequently, your constitutional rights. (222 pp)

Censored 1998: The News That Didn't Make The News



by Peter Phillips,
Project Censored



price: \$16.95
weight: 377g
code: BOOK-1-888363-64-9

The most recent in this excellent series from Project Censored, *Censored 98* reads like a fork in a wall-socket regardless of your preconceptions. The Top 25 unreported or backslotted news stories from 1998 are further enhanced by a series of mediological essays from the likes of Robert McChesney, Peter Phillips, Norman Solomon, and others, and thorough appendixes provide resources for media activists and alternative/independent writers, on-line resources, and more. I can't recommend it highly enough. (367 pp)

FringeWare Shirt: Inoculate Yourself Against Mind Control

by Don Rock



price: \$10.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0039

This is the official, authentic, one and only

FringeWare shirt. Birthed out of the white hot creative magma of Hit and Run Design Labs and individually screened by gun shocked hands of Terror Worldwide, each of these garments is a genuine work of art. On the front is a graphic something similar to the Man from U.N.C.L.E. with the deathstar globe vaguely familiar to those who loathe AT&T. Underneath is one of the FringeWare mission directives: "Inoculate Yourself Against Mind Control". On the back is the infamous equation we so love to spread and propagate. While supplies last.

FringeWare Originals

Information Hazard Warning Label



by Michael Lillquist

price: \$0.50
weight: 5g
code: MEME-0001

This 1.5" by 3.5" dayglow orange warning sticker has the 'official' international Information Hazard warning icon as well as text: "DANGER! INFORMATION HAZARD! Contents of this package contain material of an informational nature. Use of this product may lead to unforeseen consequences." Designed by Michael Lillquist as a FringeWare exclusive.

Foetus Skull Cast



by Carolina Biological Supply

price: \$39.99
weight: 565g
code: MEME-SKUL

What better conversation piece than this hand crafted cast of little Eggberts cranium? This fine German product is sure to impress even the most ardent collector of the arcane. About the size of a ripe tangerine.

PT-1001 Pocket Torch



by Cheaper Than Dirt

price: \$20.00
weight: 720g
code: GZMO-9714

The PT-1001 is a marvel of modern technology! Using a simple disposable

lighter as a fuel cell, the PT-1001 can deliver a 2400 degree Fahrenheit (1300 C) flame nonstop for 20 minutes. It has a Piezo Electronic Ignition System with a Dual Locking Safety Mechanism, an adjustable flame and fits in the palm of your hand. A perfect on the road tool for electronic technicians and pyromaniacs. US ground shipment only.

Kubotan Key Chain



by Cheaper Than Dirt

price: \$10.00
weight: 585g
code: GZMO-9715

This handsome and interesting keychain appears harmless to the uninitiated. However, when you close your fist around it it can become a deadly weapon. The close combat instrument of choice for many schools of oriental self defense, the Kubotan Key Chain is 5 and 3/4" long and made from hard unforgiving aluminum.

Universal Hacker Tool



by Cheaper Than Dirt

price: \$15.00
weight: 500g
code: GZMO-9718

These handy pocket pliers are made of solid surgical stainless steel and have 14 functions: heavy duty plier handle and pry bar, bottle opener, wire cutters, small wire stripper, large wire stripper, small blade, serrated blade, large drop point blade, file, needle nose plier, regular plier, small screwdriver, phillips screwdriver, large screwdriver... the only tool you'll need to access information in a non-traditional manner. Nylon carrying sheath included.

Polar Bear Snuff



by Devonshire Apothecary

price: \$8.00
weight: 85g
code: CHEM-0030

A very popular bit of herbal snuff to help wake you up for a long night of driving, writing, hacking or whatever. "This shameless little concoction has always been our most popular herbal toy." White powder that contains caffeine crystals, red ginseng, kava kava, menthol crystals, clove and wintergreen oils. 2.5g.

Random-Number Generator



by ATOM-AGE

price: \$170.00
weight: 2300g
code: GZMO-7840

Analog-derived noise source for computers. Amplifies, filters and digitizes the random noise generated by a diode junction, yielding a 19.2K baud RS-232 serial stream of ASCII-encoded hexadecimal digits, as consecutive four-bit concatenations of the one-bit binary stream of noise (effective 7840 bps). Battery-powered to prevent EMI, new batteries needed in months-years range. Circuit schematic diagram and source code for the on-board MPU are provided for analysis (works with M68HC705J1CS EVB kit). OEM licenses available. Nothing else in the market can touch it for price/performance. NB: not a cryptographic device.

Night Owl Goggles



by Cheaper Than Dirt

price: \$750.00
weight: 999g
code: GZMO-9822

Just like in "Silence of the Lambs", you too can track prey in the total black of your dungeon or out in the dark woods. These head mounted night vision goggles have 35,000x light amplification, 225 ft range of view, precision 1x magnification for real-time use and employ a self contained integrated infrared system. And Precious really likes 'em!

Special Cases: Natural Anomalies Historical Monsters



by Rosamond Purcell

price: \$24.95
weight: 575g
code: BOOK-0-8118-1568-4

A reasonably extensive, if somewhat cosmetic, foray into the history of oddity and monstrosity, *Special Cases* is rich with tidbits of informative text, and replete with fascinating illustrations and photographs. Ranging the gamut of Human malformation and oddity, to strange fruits and plants, to legendary monsters, this book delves into the origins of superstition and the social boundaries that evolve thereof, and does so in a titillating manner. (160 pp)

Mornings Work: Medical Photographs From The Burns Archive Collection 1843-1939

by Stanley B Burns

price: \$60.00
weight: 526g
code: BOOK-0-944092-45-4

A stunning collection of photographs portraying a wide range of medical treatments and afflictions. Over 120 black and white plates, depicting physicians at work and an incredible and horrifying array of injuries and disorders. Dr. Stanley Burns is due much gratitude for assembling this collection both historical and artistic value.

Sacred Heart: An Atlas Of The Body Seen Through Invasive Surgery



by Max Aguilera-Hellweg

price: \$50.00
weight: 752g
code: BOOK-0-8212-2377-1

At once repulsive and fascinating, the photographs in *The Sacred Heart* are like the unfolding of a flesh mandala. Comprised by a series of unflinchingly colorful portraits of surgeons at work, and studies of their subjects, *The Sacred Heart* is perhaps unique in its appreciation of the beauty that lies beneath the fragile human form. (128 pp)

CHOMSKIOLOGY

Secrets, Lies Democracy



by Noam Chomsky

price: \$6.00

weight: 232g

code: BOOK-I-878825-04-6

Compiled and edited from a series of interviews radio shows, this fact-filled book is arguably the best introduction to Chomsky's ideas. One to two page chapter-remarks on a wide variety of relevant issues: welfare, gun control, the CIA, the media, Nicaragua, China, Nazis, POWs, eco-catastrophe. In addition there is a section about how you can become involved actually do something about it all. (127 pp)

Decline Fall Of The American Empire



by Gore Vidal

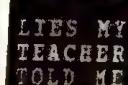
price: \$5.00

weight: 231g

code: BOOK-I-878825-00-3

Six classic Vidianian rants upon the issue of empire versus republic culled from National Press Club speeches and all published in the Nation. Vidal marks the date at which America was declared a debtor nation, September 16, 1985, as the death knell for the American Empire. Vidal further asserts the absolute right of the private individual to engage in substance use, sex with consent and, if female, abortion. He recommends force as a means of upholding these rights. For this alone, he should be read. Regardless of how full of what you feel Vidal is, he does open up certain vital issues of government that demand serious attention. (96 pp)

Lies My Teacher Told Me



by James Loewen

price: \$14.00

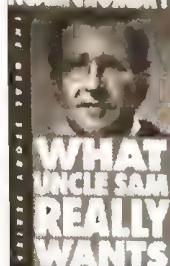
weight: 316g

code: BOOK-0-684-81886-8

Think about it: all those years that they, those "HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY AUTHORITY" teachers, stood up in front of you giving you the BIG LIE. Here's a good book to start getting straightened back out. Loewen surveyed a dozen high school history texts and found that they were full of CRAP! An optimism and patriotism bordering upon the pathological combined with calculated misinformation campaigns and bald faced, screaming LIES typify each one. Loewen goes on to tell you the TRUTH. (383 pp)

What Uncle Sam Really Wants

by Noam Chomsky



by Noam Chomsky

price: \$7.00

weight: 248g

code: BOOK-I-878825-01-1

Odonian Press publishes books on radical politics that are well written, short simply stated. They thus provide an excellent introduction to difficult political thinkers such as Chomsky. Correlating massive amount of data, Chomsky interprets US foreign policy objectives, "interventions" from El Salvador to the Gulf War, media brainwashing at home. Following money power trails, Chomsky documents a dark despotic cancer oozing inside the heart of American Politics. With notes and index. (111 pp)

Take the Rich Off Welfare

by Mark Zepezauer & Arthur Naiman



by Mark Zepezauer, Arthur Naiman

price: \$9.00

weight: 243 g

code: BOOK-I-878825-31-3

A searing analysis of "welfare" spending in this country. Essentially "welfare" is the money that the government hands out to various military, corporate entities wealthy individuals in the form of either subsidies tax breaks. In 1996, this was at least 448 billion, almost 4 times the federal deficit. The authors analyze the major culprits: from the Military, Social Security insurance loopholes to business meals, export subsidies ozone tax exemptions. Thorough notes and indices help you to get back to sources for verification further agitation. (191 pp)

Zinn Reader: Writings On Disobedience And Democracy

by Howard Zinn



price: \$19.95

weight: 382g

code: BOOK-I-888363-54-1

The Zinn Reader is a massively thorough 668 page documentary evidence of Professor Howard Zinn's work and observations. Divided into six sections ranging through the subjects of race, class, war, law, history, and 'Means and Ends', which deals with philosophies of political and social standards and actions, Zinn's writing makes no bones about crawling under the rug to see what's been swept there, and holding it up to the light. (668 pp)

Prosperous Few and the Restless Many

by Noam Chomsky



price: \$7.00

weight: 287g

code: BOOK-I-878825-03-8

Another incendiary expose of the black hole of American political motivations and objectives. Constructed out of a series of interviews, this straightforward book presents Chomsky's concerns over the "international state" that will lead to a de facto world government. The only way the Prosperous Few can maintain power is by controlling the opinions of the Complacent Many. So fuck the Coke and the smile. Don't be suckered into believing the you need a break today. It doesn't taste great anymore and it's not less filling. Rest Less. (95 pp)

CIA's Greatest Hits



by Mark Zepezauer

price: \$7.00

weight: 234g

code: BOOK-I-878825-30-5

An interesting, if disturbing, survey of 42 of the CIA's "biggest crimes." Tightly written 2 page chapters sketch out such CIA classics as MK-ULTRA, the Bay of Pigs, JFK, Jonestown, Pan Am Flight 103 and a shadowy slew of others. This is an excellent introduction to the myriad abuses of power that are performed under the perfidious auspices of the CIA. There is a source listing for each chapter at the end. (95 pp)

Millennium



by Hakim Bey

price: \$7.00

weight: 276g

code: BOOK-I-57027-045-7

As the end of this particular millennium unfolds around us, there is perhaps no saner voice amidst the dooms預achers and rant mongers than Hakim Bey. This book, somewhat paradoxically, triangulates (i.e. develops) the radical "communism" of TAZ with the "capitalistic" issues of Immediatism. With the collapse of Communism between 1989-91, Bey understands the century to have ended. We are now in the midst of a world so utterly new, that the language itself is inadequate (and suspect) to describe it. Islam, with its revolutionary grammar of jihad, offers possible entrance into comprehension. Make no mistake: this is a powerful document calling for an all out moral, political and economic war. Be prepared. Read. Don't be One of the Same. (112 pp)

Lords Of Chaos: The Bloody Rise Of The Black Metal Mafia



by Michael Moynihan

price: \$14.95
weight: 285g
code: BOOK-0-922915-48-2

Focusing on the ritual and rise of the Black Metal scene- particularly in Norway- this rich study easily transcends any sort of generic categorization. Excellent historical root ripping, incredible interviews, intense photos, occult mythologies and satanic sympathies make this THE watermark for all subsequent pretenders. It doesn't just piss on the grave of all previous works, it digs them up, eats their bones and vomits up a thing of black bloody beauty. (358 pp)

September Commando: Gestures of Futility



by John Yates

price: \$11.95
weight: 310g
code: BOOK-1-873176-52-X

Combining electrical visuals with piercing slogans, September Commando is a masterful collection of appropriated images captioned with truisms that cut to the heart of the matter; 'Proximity does not guarantee intimacy', 'Build them targets and they will come', 'All are welcome with exceptions', and 'Pledge allegiance to indoctrination', to name a few. John Yates' 'Stealworks', responsible for this and other Yates projects, is one of the best examples of skillful, cutting, politically and culturally motivated bill-board-styled art. (95 pp)

Amok Journal: (senssurround edition)



by Stuart Swezey
(ed)

price: \$19.95
weight: 329g
code: BOOK-1-878923-03-X

This incredible volume covers in detail: Autoerotic Fatalities (w/ illos); Trepanation; Gualtiero Jacopetti; Cargo Cults; NSK (Neue Slovenische Kunst); Self-mutilation Amputee Fetish; Infra-sound; Psych-Out (the psycho-physiological tranformations and sensational outcroppings in human behavior). (474 pp)

The Imp?: Holy Book of Chick



by Dan Raeburn (ed)

price: \$5.95
weight: 198g
code: ZINE-TIMP

Illustrated by the one and only Dan Clowes and edited by the revered Dan Raeburn, this is a sweet little pamphleted warp on that "most widely read theologian in history": Jack T. Chick. Includes critical examinations of the Chick theology, a Chick check-list, Apocrypha and Dictionary-Concordance. Oversized Jack Chick size.

Winner Of The Slow Bicycle Race: The Satirical Writings Of Paul Krassner



by Paul Krassner

price: \$11.95
weight: 348g
code: BOOK-1-888363-44-4

Founder of The Realist magazine, having worked with, among other notables, Lenny Bruce, Abbie Hoffman, and Jerry Rubin, and written for fistfuls of prominent magazines, media shows, and people, Krassner is among some of the most treasured of public fools, the intelligent and perceptive jester-critics of social malady. Winner of the Slow Bicycle Race collects numerous short pieces of bite-size text that each embody a world of observation. Relentless and hilarious, pieces like "I Snorted Cocaine with the Pope," "Hypnotic Age Regression of a Television Addict," and "Sex Education for the Modern Catholic Child" use the inherent ridiculousness of our social structures to crawl inside your head and, lo and behold, MAKE YOU THINK. What a concept. (350 pp)

Ken's Guide To the Bible



by Ken Smith

price: \$7.95
weight: 317g
code: BOOK-0-922233-17-9

Essentially a map to all the "good parts" of the Bible, meaning the sex, violence, absurdities and overall weirdness that are usually swept under the Christian Carpet. Designed for years of surreptitious use in a wide variety of holy places, the Guide includes a set of easy-reference icons such as a laughing bull for "Bunk" and a crucified pretzel for "Holy Distortion". At the back is Ken's Bible Sex Concordance and the Bonus Anti-Abortionist Horror Concordance, subdivided into "References to Pregnant Women Being Ripped Open" and "References to Children Being Murdered". Recommended. (143 pp)

Guy Debord: Revolutionary



by Len Bracken

price: \$14.95
weight: 298g
code: BOOK-0-922915-44-X

Amazingly, this is the first critical biography of the influential and enigmatic Debord in any language. Bracken has appropriately framed the biographical events of Debord's life in the rich historical context of his times. From childhood in WWII France to early revolutionary formations of the Situationist International and crucial influences amidst the Paris riots of '68, Bracken shows the critical role Debord played in late 20th century culture. Included is the previously untranslated board game, "The Game of War". (267 pp)



fringe fiction

Meeting The Minotaur

by Carol Dawson



price: \$22.95
weight: 466g
code: BOOK-1-56512-126-0

Dawson's third novel, a contemporary parallel of the Theseus myth, admirably demonstrates the applicability of the mythic structure as an enduring illustrator of social patterning and human truth. Taylor Deeds, a young bastard from Texas, embarks upon a quest to confront his father and discover his own identity and self-purpose. Those familiar with the legend of Theseus will find Dawson's adaptation of the myth both fascinating and engaging, with some surprising twists on the original, while all who read the book will discover the intimate and joyous resonance of a myth well told, by an excellent storyteller. (398 pp)

Wiggling Wishbone: Stories of Pata-Sexual Speculation

WIGGLING WISHBONE by bart plantenga



price: \$8.00
weight: 286g
code: BOOK-1-57027-009-0

A collection of short stories that wickedly challenge contemporary notions of form and content. Informed with a razor sharp intelligence, these Borgesian tales explore such topics as sex with Andy Warhol, Hitler's Dog and a beer mystic's cocktail recipes. (157 pp)

Resume With Monsters

by William Browning Spencer



price: \$5.99
weight: 289g
code: BOOK-1-56504-913-6

Cthulhu meets Corporate America in this novel of ennui and entrails. Follow Philip, an aspiring writer as he struggles between losing his mind and losing his job. What happened one night at the offices of his former employer? Did he really see the company's management team summoning horrific creatures from another dimension, or was that a symptom of a nervous breakdown? Possibly one of the funniest horror novels I've ever read. A must read for any Lovecraft fan, or anyone trapped in a corporate job. (469 pp)

Explanation & Other Good Advice

by Don Webb



price: \$9.95
weight: 275g
code: BOOK-1-877655-25-2

Don Webb's latest is a collection of 26 stellar short stories, many which have been previously published in New Pathways, Back Brain Recluse, Eldritch Tales and Processed World- to name but a few. On the back cover we have Factsheet Five calling Don "the mad shaman genius of Austin" and claiming that he "oozes with that raw unrelenting imagination that the rest of us lost about age six". So check it out and let your imagination rawly and unrelentingly ooze once more. While supplies last. (124 pp)

Watchfiends Rack Screams: Works From The Final Period

by Antonin Artaud, Clayton Eshleman (ed/trans)



price: \$15.95
weight: 337g
code: BOOK-1-878972-18-9

Before Burroughs' "algebra of need", Artaud integrated into his complex fragile personality a similar creative motor- what he called "the culture of the void." Most obviously related to his opium addiction, this notion was also a large aspect of his creative project, perhaps even underwriting the final recovery of his mental health. Out of this reclamation came a large body of significant, usually overlooked, poetry. Eshleman has done a fine job editing translating this important collection of Artaud's later poetry, prose poems aphorisms. Many of the translations are for the first time presented bilingually. (342 pp)

Return of Count Electric

by William Browning Spencer



price: \$5.99
weight: 289g
code: BOOK-1-56504-871-7

This short story collection shows that the author of *Resume With Monsters* is no one trick pony. These eleven stories will scratch out a little corner of your head, and you'll never be able to look at a wedding photographer the same way again. Spencer's main theme for these stories seem to be "Things are not as they seem." And what a great premise it is. I flew through this book, and it left me thirsty for more. More, goddamit. (253 pp)

Spell For the Fulfillment of Desire

by Don Webb



price: \$7.95
weight: 247g
code: BOOK-1-57366-012-4

An exquisite collection of Webbian short stories, 23 in all. Webb's writing, both dark and delightful, has appeared in numerous national magazines, including nearly every issue of FringeWare Review, from which the story "Adipose Abecedarium" is reprinted. Readers be forewarned, however, you may never feel the same way about zebras again. (147 pp)

Stealing My Rules

STEALING MY RULES

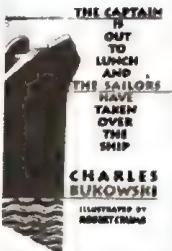


price: \$5.00
weight: 244g
code: BOOK-1-886988-05-6

A recent Don Webb short story collection, 13 in all, weighing in at 71 pages. Learn about time addiction and the rebirth of the Ancient Rituals. Great introduction by Paul Di Filippo.

Captain Is Out to Lunch The Sailors Have Taken Over the Ship

by Charles Bukowski



price: \$14.00
weight: 305g
code: BOOK-1-57423-058-1

The latest posthumous Buk publication. What we have here is the familiar pseudo short stories as diary entries. Little blood and alcohol soaked slices of a life lived all the way up. As if you needed added inducement, R. Crumb has hilariously illustrated the Buk Word. Sell them bones, sell them bones. (144 pp)

Nonconformity: Writing On Writing

by Nelson Algren



price: \$9.95
weight: 325g
code: BOOK-1-888363-62-2

Algren recognized the tragedy in his calling, while also perceiving the necessity and nobility intrinsic to the work of a writer. In this book-length essay, Algren observes upon the condition of the writer, and of writing in general, with an unswerving and unhesitant eye, and, in the process, brings into the light the true calling of the writers: to provide a reflective conscience for the world around them. (131 pp)

Psychedelia Britannica: Hallucinogenic Drugs in Britain

PSYCHEDELIA
BRITANNICA
HALLUCINOGENIC DRUGS IN BRITAIN



by Antonio Melechi (ed)

price: \$19.95
weight: 374g
code: BOOK-1-873262-05-1

An informative anthology about the British psychedelic experience. No other class of drug has as much transformative potential as the hallucinogens. And the essays in this collection by Roland Sandison, Alexander Trocchi, Simon Reynolds and Stuart Metcalf, amongst others, offer vivid testimony to the particular effects that hallucinogens have upon the cultural experience. The foreword by Albert Hofmann remarks upon the possibilities of a "shamanic society". (212 pp)

Secret Chief: Conversations With A Pioneer Of The Underground Movement



by Myron Stolaroff

price: \$10.95
weight: 250 g
code: BOOK-0-9660019-1-5

This is the first book published by the always excellent journal, The Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS). The Secret Chief was a man known as "Jacob" who worked underground to conduct psychedelic psychotherapy sessions with about three thousand subjects. Over the years, Jacob amassed an amazing wealth of knowledge and wisdom about the benefits and dangers of psychedelic psychotherapy. And fortunately for us, Myron Stolaroff sought to preserve this information in a series of remarkable conversations with this pioneer. The prologue is by Stan Grof, the tribute by Ann Shulgin, the foreword by Albert Hofmann and the epilogue by Sasha Shulgin. (144 pp) For more information see: www.maps.org

Virgin Sperm Dancer: An Ecstatic Journey



by William Levy, Ginger Gordon
price: \$25.00
weight: 375g
code: BOOK-90-6019-20316

An oversized photographic "essay" about the "ecstatic journey" of a boy transformed into a girl for one day only, and her erotic adventures in Amsterdam, magic centrum". Looks like a black and white 70's porn spread done by a wicked group of disgruntled Life magazine editors. (72 pp)

Psychedelic Underground Library

Psychedelic
Underground
Library
Sex, Love, Classics

Sex, Love, Classics

by Adam Gottlieb, et al

price: \$22.95
weight: 290g
code: BOOK-0-914171-66-6

Finally, the fine folks at Ronin have collected together nine of the classic psychedelic pamphlets: "The Book of Acid", "Peyote", "The Psilocybin Producer's Guide", "Drug Manufacturing For Fun and Profit", "Herbal Aphrodisiacs", "Herbal Highs", "Home Grown Highs", "Cocaine Tester's Handbook" and "Freebase Cocaine". The amount of subversive information per page is truly staggering. (190 pp)

City of Broken Dolls



by Romaine Slocombe

price: \$19.95
weight: 730g
code: BOOK-1-871592-81-X

Slocombe's fetish photography has quickly achieved renown for its stylized erotic perspective. Young Asian women in various stages of medical disarray, some fully clothed, others in undergarments, all sporting miscellaneous evidence of injury, ranging from bruises to plaster casts and traction. This collection of portraits is provocative, to say the least, and downright controversial in almost any arena. Of course, *City Of Broken Dolls* has already become verboten for many book distributors and stores in the U.S. 98 black and white plates in all, with an intro by the inimitable Richard Kern.

Index



by Peter Sotos

price: \$12.95
weight: 274g
code: BOOK-1-84068-000-8

You've got to smile when you see the little note on the back of this book: "Warning: Contains Adult Material". With regard to Sotos, this has to be one of the greater understatements. This is porn with its skin ripped off: blood and mucous drenched prose quivering in stark and graphic truth. If you are looking for the written intensities of the Word, then you need look no more. Sotos is to most writers of eroticism what a vibrating rotating Japanese beaverheaded dildo is to a stick shaking in the wind. (150 pp)

Edge Of The Bed: How Dirty Pictures Changed My Life

by Lisa Palac



price: \$22.95
weight: 427g
code: BOOK-0-316-68849-5

This autobiography, by Future Sex founding editor Lisa Palac, explores the liberating effects of pornography, the eroticism of religion, and the unprecedented sexual honesty created in the age of the Internet – just what is or isn't alleged "cybersex" good for? The erotic tension of this book (which reads like a secret diary from an Adrienne Shelly character) derives from the sincerity and bareness of Lisa's personal experiences, described with a welcome mix of poignancy and humor as she grows from midwestern Catholic schoolgirl to a renowned sex-positive feminist cyberwho of the 1990's.

Screw The Roses, Send Me The Thorns: The Romance and Sexual Sorcery of Sadomasochism



by Philip Miller, Molly Devon
price: \$24.95
weight: 750g
code: BOOK-0-9645964-0-8

Good instructional information on S&M is difficult to find. Far too often, such manuals suffer from either style over substance or sad power posturing. This book has neither of these faults. It is the best book on S&M technique in print. With a refreshing sense of humor, the authors explore and explain every facet of the wide wild world of S&M. Read it and learn the pleasures of pain- or vice-versa. (277 pp)

Last Day of Summer



by Jack Sturges

price: \$29.95
weight: 310g
code: BOOK-0-89381-538-1

Arguably one of the most talented portrait photographers of his time, Jock Sturges' works are poetic statements of the ethereal innocence and beauty associated with youth. Sometimes suffused with a barely sensed underlying sexuality, at other times pregnant with sadness, or overhung with an impending weight that somehow voices the unspoken, these photos are works of art, spanning the boundary between onlooker and experience. (96 pp)

Anton LaVey Candle



by Michael Hunt Publishing

price: 6.66
weight: 999g
code: MEME-9990

A memorial glass encased candle with LaVey's charismatic image glaring out from black depths. The reverse has an inverted pentagram that will undoubtedly shine bright as the flame burns lower.

Aleister Crowley Candle



by Michael Hunt Publishing

price: 6.66
weight: 999g
code: MEME-3333

A beautiful glass encased candle with the iconographic image of the Great Beast screened on to it. The other side gives the Law: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law". The perfect altar piece.

Best of Temp Slave



by Jeff Kelly

price: \$10.00
weight: 286g
code: BOOK-I-891053-42-6

Collecting highlights from the ever-popular, ever-succinct, zine, 'Temp Slave', *The Best of Temp Slave* is a document of its time, depicting the social environment of the temp worker in all its squalid glory, through cartoons, stories, and any other means possible.

Motorcycle Diaries



by Ernesto Che Guevara,
Ann Wright (trans)

price: \$11.00
weight: 274g
code: BOOK-I-85984-066-3

In 1951, just before qualifying as a doctor, a 23 year old Che took off on this South American road journey. His diaries read something like a portrait of a revolutionary leader as a young beat. It is beautifully appropriate to read how the hero of liberated Cuba scammed meals on the streets of San Ramon with his friend. Here is that time of youth and peace before he entered into that "sacred precinct within... the bestial howl of the victorious proletariat." (155 pp)



Flesh Machine: Cyborgs, Designer Babies, and New Eugenic Consciousness



by Critical Art Ensemble

price: \$8.00
weight: 286 g
code: BOOK-I-57027-067-8

This is the latest from the always stimulating Critical Art Ensemble. Contents include: "Posthuman Development in the Age of Pancapitalism", "Nihilism in the Flesh", "Buying Time for the Flesh Machine: Pharmacology and Social Order" and "Eugenics: The Second Wave". (155 pp)



Official Corporate Sameness Bag

by Immediate Industries

price: free
weight: 187g
code: MEME-ABAG

Join the fight against the corporate-think which wants to reduce everyone to a single consumer identity! By wearing this handsomely crafted bag as you peruse the tedium of superficial product at the mall or local chain store, you will be the envy of individualists and deep thinkers everywhere. Be one of the heard, not one of the herd.

'Bob' Mug



by Church of the SubGenius

price: \$8.00
weight: 578g
code: CHEM-0500

'Bob' Dobbs greets you with his classic grin. Enjoy your favorite beverage in comfort as X-Day comes to your door. White porcelain, with graphic.

'Bob' Hat



by Church of the SubGenius

price: \$17.00
weight: 285g
code: SKIN-0515

'Baseball' style slack hat, with a color embroidered 'Bob' face. Stand out from the Normals with this black cotton cap.

100's of Severed Heads



by Church of the SubGenius

price: \$13.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0516

A 50's clip art style skull farmer proudly shows off his harvest. Ash cotton, size XL only. From the people who care, the Church of the SubGenius.

SubGenius Keychain

by Church of the SubGenius



price: \$5.00
weight: 245g
code: WEAR-0230

What could be more enlightening than to have your KEYS on a BOB Keychain? Chances are that you will never lose your KEYS again. This handsome piece of REAL animal leather is adorned in PURE gold script proclaiming your intimate and eternal knowledge of SLACK. And, it comes with two, that's right, TWO rings. Get yours before it's too late and we don't have any more!

Good 'Bob' / Bad 'Bob' Shirt



by Church of the SubGenius

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0512

The ultimate SubGenius shirt, two sided, the front features 'Bob' himself, with a detailed alchemical border and a blue background, the back features Ngh, the 'Anti-Bob' in his green scaled glory, with a red background. White cotton, size XL. Not for the timid. A product of the Church of SubGenius.

terror t-shirts

Happiness Is A Warm Gun Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0167

A happy youth displays his rifle while proud Dad looks on. Family values at it's most poignant. Overlayed text reads the classic aphorism coined by that guy who got shot... The Terror logo's on the back. White cotton, size XL.

Jesus Loves You Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0229

Black white graphic of masked soldiers, of implied non-American descent, is headlined by 'Jesus Loves You' in bold, comforting letters, but underscored by the caption, 'problems remained'. Oh, the irony. 100% baby, off-white cotton, size XL.

Kid Tested, Mother Approved TERROR Shirt



by Terror Worldwide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0203

WORLDWIDE The Terror logo, an AK-47 surrounded by the slogan "Kid tested, Mother Approved". Multi-colored screen print, white cotton, size XL. From the name that means quality, Terror World Wide.

Wm. S. Burroughs Shirt



by Terror Worldwide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0200

William S. Burroughs wearing a hat and coat surrounded by his own text. Multi-colored screen print, white cotton, size XL. From the name that means quality, Terror World Wide.

Fuck Control Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-9819

Beautifully expressed in simple text overlaying a police brutality graphic. Fashion at it's most sublime. Off-white or black, 100% cotton (so the bloodstains will come out with a little soda water), size XL.

Terror's Fuck the World Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0235

Image of the earth surrounded by the text "Fuck the World, Save Yourselves". Black cotton size XL only. Each shirt also has a mini 'kid tested' logo sleeve print a large 'Terror World Wide' logo on the reverse. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Satan is Love Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0215

Cute puppy print with 70's trippy font, proclaiming 'Satan is Love'. Reverse says 'Terror World Wide'. Black Cotton, specify XL or baby girl T. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Manson Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0206

Everyone's favorite criminal larger than life, text reads: "Charles Manson the most famous mass murderer in history". Multi-colored screen print, black cotton, size XL. From the name that means quality, Terror World Wide. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

I Is For Ignorance Shirt

by Terror WorldWide



price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0233

Learn the alphabet the terror way and demonstrate the follies of egotism and hoodwearing with this lovely garment.

Revolution Will Not Be Televised Shirt

by Terror WorldWide



price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0204

Television tuned to a dead channel, the text reads 'SLEEP'. Reverse says 'KILL YOUR TV'. From the name that means quality, Terror World Wide. XL and babydoll.

Burroughs w/ Gun Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0202

Bill Burroughs, doing what he likes best, pointing a gun. Multi-colored screen print, white Cotton, size XL.

Prayer Wheels Shirt

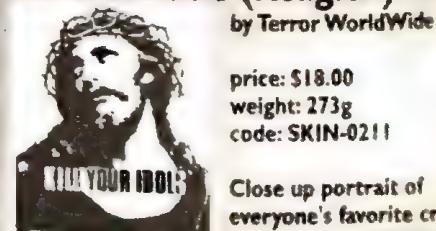


by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0205

Prayer wheel of hand guns surrounding the sanskrit ohm symbol. Reverse reads Terror World Wide. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Kill Your Idols (Religion) Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273g
code: SKIN-0211

Close up portrait of everyone's favorite crucified guy w/text "Kill Your Idols". White cotton w/ multi-colored screen print, size XL only.

Guerilla Shirt



by Terror WorldWide
price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-9820

Army font reads 'Guerilla' across the front, the Terror buzzsaw logo is on the back. Show your allegiance where it counts. Standard issue for the UDRDF, all the brethren wear them to work. Woodland Camo in 100% cotton harvested by those oppressed by the yoke of capitalism, size XL.

Surf and Destroy Shirt



by Terror WorldWide
price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code:

Militant youth brandishing a handgun, surrounded by the text "Surf and Destroy" in 'punk' style cut

out lettering. XL, Black cloth, white ink. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

CULTURE (Elvis) Shirt



by Terror WorldWide
price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0218

Drugged up Elvis & President Tricky Dick posing for the camera, a truly pivotal moment in US narcotics history. White cotton, XL.

Manson Family Values Shirt



MANSON by Terror WorldWide

price: \$15.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0223

Charlie's portrait surrounded by text

"FAMILY VALUES" & "each night while you sleep I destroy the world". Multi-colored screen print on black cotton, size XL.

Drugs Make Your Eyes Bleed



by Terror WorldWide
price: \$15.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0226

Text headline screams "Drugs make your eyes bleed!", & "just say 'no'." Hands clutching a pistol make for an eye gouging graphic. Black cotton, size XL only. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Know Your Enemy (Cop) Shirt

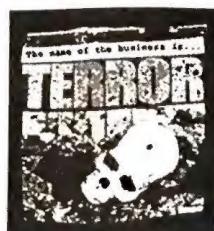


by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0230

New in the Terror Garment Family this bold graphic depicts 'Officer Friendly' holding a shotgun, black text proclaims "KNOW YOUR ENEMY", sleeve has Terror's AK logo and reverse says "Terror World Wide". Size XL, specify black or olive cotton. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Name of the Business Shirt



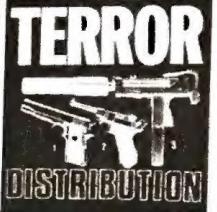
by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0236

A skull with a bullet hole framed with the text "the name of the business is Terror".

Black cotton size XL only. Each shirt also has a mini 'kid tested' logo sleeve print and a large 'Terror World Wide' logo on the reverse. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

Terror Distribution Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0258

It's as easy as 1,2,3. Black XL. This design can be ordered as a long sleeved shirt for an additional \$4.00.

I (heart) Terror Shirt

by Terror WorldWide



price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0259

Bright pink heart with happy yellow AK47. Wear with pride. White XL.

Kill Your Idols (\$\$\$) Shirt



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$18.00
weight: 273 g
code: SKIN-0212

Fight the powers of Mammon with this image of old mushroom head. White XL.

Stickers & Fire

Terror Enjoy Satan Sticker



by Terror World Wide

code: MEME-ENSA
weight: 26g
price: 1.00

Fight the spread of corporate logos with this elegant and familiar red and white statement.

Kill All Hippies Sticker



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$1.00
weight: 20g
code: MEME-2224

Simple sentiments, eloquently framing a hand grenade. Put this on your car at any Phish show and let the heads roll.

I (heart) Violence Sticker



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$1.00
weight: 20g
code: MEME-2223

One of the most popular bumper stickers we stock, the "I (heart) violence" message will equally confound and horrify all who gaze upon you.

Terror Worldwide Lighter



by Terror Worldwide

price: \$25.00
weight: 425g
code: GZMO-0098

A classic Zippo lighter with the Terror Worldwide logo emblazoned on the side. Whenever you pull this little jewel out and make the bright and burning flame, you are sure to become the object of admiration of arsonists and anarchists everywhere.

Fuck The World Save Yourself Sticker



by Terror WorldWide

price: \$1.00
weight: 18g
code: MEME-2225

Tried and true sentiments on a weather proof vinyl sticker.

Melba Comes Alive CD

Melba Comes Alive!

by Brother Russell

price: \$12.00

weight: 257g

code: HEAR-6666

Brother Russell's latest collection of telephone art, the fantastic sequel to *Radio Jihad*. This time, branching out from religious talk shows, Russell also calls as "Smegmeh Fonduh" a confused gentleman filled with the holy spirit and a thick Indian accent, and poses as a christian sex video distributor "Peter Long" whose products "depict married men again christian men and women performing cunnilingus and other sex acts, in a tasteful manner". When you get to Hell, be sure to thank Brother Russell.

Worldwide Living Death Frankenstein Slavery: The Desperate Messages of Francis E Dec, Esq: A Dramatic Reading

WORLDWIDE
LIVING DEATH
FRANKENSTEIN
SLAVERY

The Desperate Messages of Francis E. Dec, Esq.

A Human Drama

by El Hermano "R"

price: \$10.00

weight: 257g

code: HEAR-WLDF

Many a fine mind has lost its way inside the labyrinthian windings of the modern world. Few however, have more eloquently expressed their pure racial, mysoginistic, paranoid and venom filled views than Mr. Dec. Dispatches from the front lines of the Insanity Wars are read by renegade radio announcer types in full-blown late-night used-car salesman styles. You will not be disappointed. Let your auditory lobes quiver with the transgressions of Dec.

Brother Russell's Radio Jihad CD

RADIO JIHAD

by Brother Russell

price: \$12.00

weight: 257g

code: HEAR-6666



Radio Jihad is 60 minutes of prank calls to religious and talk radio shows by 'Melba' and 'Dave'. The calls range from Melba's senility induced prattle to Dave's bizarre christian conspiracy theories. The responses of the hosts range from confusion to semi-coherent vitriolic attacks against 'the diseased homosexual community'. Christian bashing as entertainment. Ideal listening material for those Sunday morning church induced traffic jams.

Here Is Melba!



by Brother Russell

price: \$10.00

weight: 257g

code: HEAR-HERE

From the nipponfactory copy: "Known for Texas local by secret 'QVC Call' or 'lost Melba' tape cassettes, these hilarity of brother Russell all now make you fun with great full-long CD disk. Controversy comic 'Brother' is all-ways bringing zany on consumer socialites and religions here today with telephone's 'old lady' and 'Mr Fondoo' attack." Over 70 minutes of laugh pastime riot bootleg lost rarest of zany! It's racy!

chao:

Madame Chao's

by Madame Chao

price: \$10.00

weight: 335 g

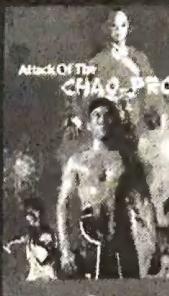
code: NTSC-CHAO2



Chop-sockey Simpson hardpon multi-colored mescaline eye candy flavored with strychnine and cayenne with tekno static cheap tequila undertones and doggy style media incisions under a rusty knife... the sequel! Parental guidance recommended-- if your parents are cosmetic surgeons who drink cough syrup in humongous amounts, chased with broken glass and slivers of razor blades, at sleazy kung fu 'swinger' parties.

Attack Of The Chao Prod

by Madame Chao



price: \$10.00

weight: 335g

code: NTSC-CHAO1

Produced and directed by Homer J. Fong, starring Tard Fei Chao, Mar Ki Chi, and Enormous Genitars, as an extreme cut-up examination of the utter ranges of human sexual response, viewed in the context of fucking, death, cartoons, ninjas, sci-fi, stand-up comics, amputation, Gojira, and the more poignant self-reflections of Homer Simpson. This brilliant work deconstructs the speculative and visceral realms of Hong Kong, American and Japanese television, tuned to an amphetamine channel. Spawed from "NYC Public Access Terevision", if Madame Chao does not succeed in arousing your tingles, of whatever persuasion, into a mad frenzy, then you might as well go ahead and off yourself right now.

www.fringeware.com

Slaughter & The Philosophy

by Vincent O'Brien



price: \$25.00

weight: 335g

code: NTSC-6666

Two extreme and engaging videos by the award winning artist, Vincent O'Brien. "Slaughter" is a 22 minute primal exploration of a Texas slaughterhouse set to child-like tribal rhythms. "The Philosophy" is an intense and humorous monologous 17 minute presentation by the actor, James Bennington, in rare rant form. The verbal humor and horror in "The Philosophy" resonate well with the graphic visual trauma depicted in "Slaughter". Are you searching for the fire? Here it is.

Junky (Audio)



by William S Burroughs
(read by the author)

price: \$16.95

weight: 413g

code: HEAR-0-14-086445-8

Like the sound of a well worn shoe rocking gently against the rounded ass of a young Moroccan boy, the voice of William Burroughs was one of the more identifiable tones of this auditory age. And here you have the Master himself chanting the incantatory mysteries of his own Word in *Junky*, his first novel. So get the Dream Machine spinning, crawl into the blue light of your orgone energy box and lay back and let one of the Magi deliver the Gift. Abridged. (2 cassettes, 3 hours)

William Shatner: Songs & Stories

by Hal Jalicakick



price: 15.00

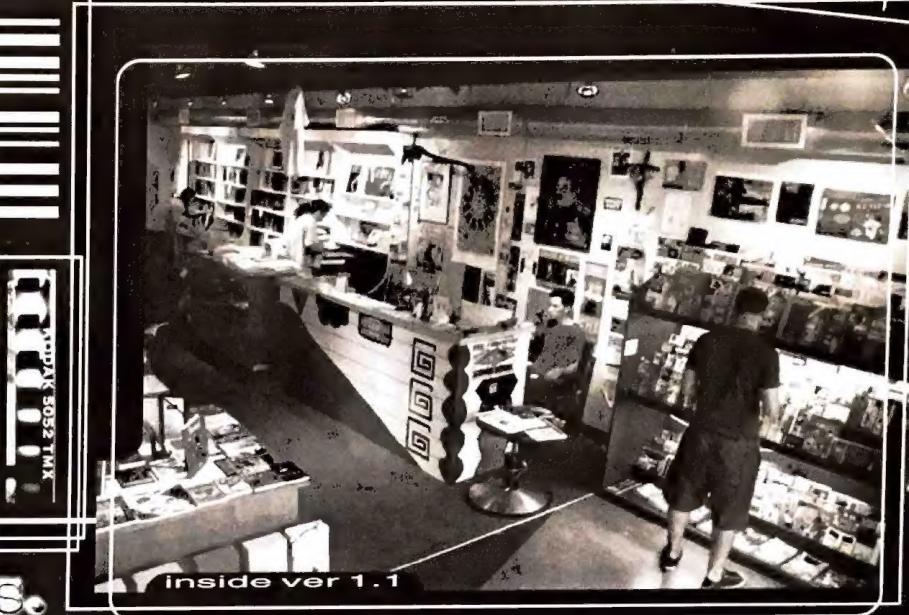
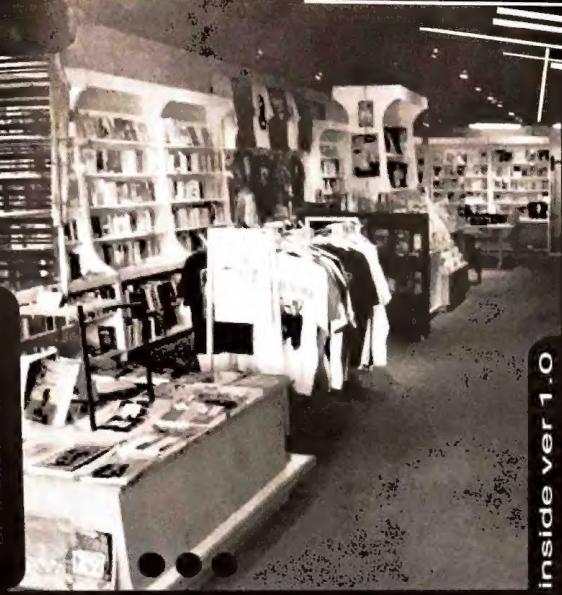
weight: 335g

code: NTSC-SHAT

A Collection Of Eight Incredible Musical Performances (Plus Some Terrific Tall Tales). The definitive video for even the most hard core Shatnerologist. Features twisted and surreal moments on various talk shows and glistening renditions of "Rocket Man", "I Wanna Sex You Up" and "(It Was) A Very Good Year"- amongst a host of hilarious others.

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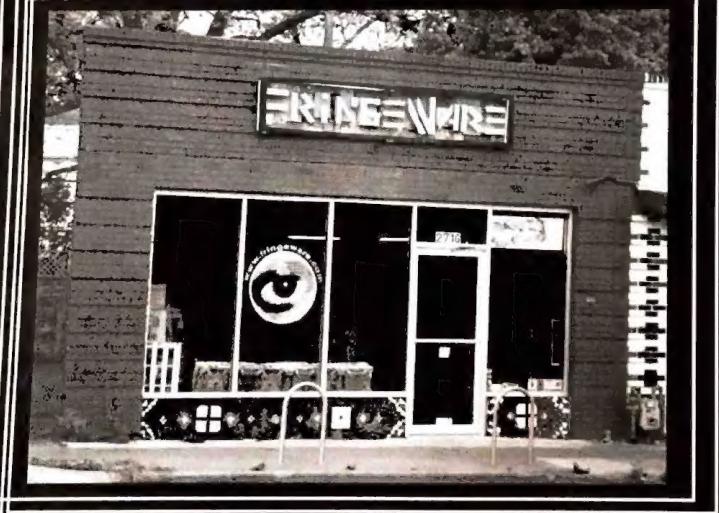
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